THE HOLY TERROR

CAST

THE DOCTOR	Colin Baker
FROBISHER	Robert Jezek
CAPTAIN SEJANUS	Dan Hogarth
EUGENE TACITUS	Sam Kelly
BERENGARIA	Roberta Taylor
LIVILLA	Helen Punt
CHILDERIC	Peter Guinness
PEPIN	Stefan Atkinson
CLOVIS	Peter Sowerbutts
ARNULF	Bruce Mann

PART ONE

Scene 1

INT. The dungeons of a castle. Dank and damp, with the faint sound of dripping water. There is some echo. A few seconds of peace, establishing this. Then an old creaking door is thrust open, and a man forced bodily into the room.

SEJANUS: On your knees, prisoner!
SCRIBE: What? Oh yes, certainly...
SEJANUS: Quickly! On your knees!
SCRIBE: *(amiably)* Honestly, I'm doing it as quickly as I can. It's hard at my age to...
(A little grunt, and the slight slap of hands against stone.)
See, there you are. Ooh, these dungeon floors are a little cold, aren't they? I take it this is the dungeon?
(A scroll is unfolded and brandished.)
SEJANUS: Are you Eugene Tacitus, scribe to the emperor?
SCRIBE: Oh, absolutely.
SEJANUS: And do you know why you have been brought here?
SCRIBE: No, not really, I mean, I tried asking this chap behind me, but all he'd do was prod me with his sword and tell me to be silent, so I didn't push the matter. It's all been a bit of a blur, I was fast asleep half an hour ago, when my door is broken down and I'm dragged out of bed... Hardly time for me even to put on my dressing gown. Look, would it be all right if I put on my spectacles? If I'm going to be interrogated on a dungeon floor, it'd be some comfort to see what's going on. They're in my pocket...
SEJANUS: No quick moves now.
SCRIBE: No, no, I'll put them on very slowly. There. That's better. My word, it really is horribly dank down here, isn't it?
(More scroll business.)
SEJANUS: You have been brought here to answer one simple question.
SCRIBE: Well, fire away.
SEJANUS: Whom do you worship, Eugene Tacitus?
SCRIBE: Well, I'd say the living god, emperor Pepin VI. Doesn't everyone?
(There is a horrified gasp of breath from two nearby guards.)
SEJANUS: Easy, men. Don't be shocked by the blasphemy.
SCRIBE: I take it that's the wrong answer then?
SEJANUS: The living god emperor Pepin VI is dead.
SCRIBE: Oh. Whoops.
SEJANUS: He fell asleep in his bath and drowned.
SCRIBE: Not a very dignified way to go.
SEJANUS: The new living god is now emperor Pepin VII. And all those who worship Pepin VI commit heresy and must be executed forthwith.
(We hear swords being pulled out of scabbards.)
SCRIBE: Oh dear. Forthwith, you say?
SEJANUS: According to the holy rituals, the condemned will have

one eye gouged out, the other left intact to watch the flames rise as he is burned at the stake.

SCRIBE: Not a terribly dignified way to go either.

SEJANUS: You are to be taken from this place, to a cell waiting execution. You will be allowed no contact with your family. And your remains will not be placed in holy ground. And your name will be reviled for ever more, and held as a byword for apostasy. Unless you are prepared to recant immediately, and pledge allegiance to the living god Pepin VII.

SCRIBE: Oh, well, I think I'll recant then.

SEJANUS: Is that your final decision, Eugene Tacitus?

SCRIBE: Absolutely.

SEJANUS: *(amiably)* Oh, well, that's fine then. Swords back, men. We've got another one who wants to recant.

(The swords are sheathed in their scabbards, with a couple of mildly disappointed groans.)

Now then...

(He picks up some other papers, leafs through them.)

If you'd just like to sign this recantation form... Here...

SCRIBE: Right...

SEJANUS: And here... And here is your dark blue receipt of your recantation. And here is your light blue receipt, which can be exchanged for a dark blue receipt if the original is mislaid.

SCRIBE: Thanks very much. That's fine.

SEJANUS: Sorry about all the formality, sir, I'm sure you understand...

SCRIBE: Oh, of course. It's tradition. I know that.

SEJANUS: If you don't mind finding your own way out, I'd be grateful. I've got dozens of interrogations to conduct before morning.

(We hear an old door creaking open, SCRIBE's footsteps on stone hesitantly.)

You can't miss it, just keep going up.

Scene 2: INT.

The Empress' bedroom. Peaceful music plays on a lute. We hear, faintly, nails being scrubbed hard. Then, with a faint sigh, the scrubbing stops.

BERENGARIA: Why have you stopped, Livilla? Are you tired?

LIVILLA: No, your highness. I shall continue.

BERENGARIA: Of course you're tired. I've had you polishing my toenails for the last four hours. Your arms must be ready to drop off. Tell me the truth now.

LIVILLA: *(flatly)* Yes, your highness. I am in great pain.

BERENGARIA: Well, that's no good to me at all. Not unless I can hear the pain in your voice. You shall continue scrubbing them then, Livilla. We'll see how long it takes you to cry.

LIVILLA: *(flatly)* Yes, your highness.

BERENGARIA: I want my toenails so shiny I'll be able to see my face in them. Or could, if only I could see my feet over my stomach. But rest assured, Livilla, next morning I shall ask a servant if she can see her face in my toenails, and if she can't, I shall have you flogged.

(There is thumping at the door.)

What is it? Who's there?

(The door breaks down.)

Guard Captain Sejanus! How dare you disturb me? I shall have you flogged as well!

SEJANUS: I bring news, madam. The Emperor is dead.

(And, rather awkwardly, the lute music stops.)

BERENGARIA: *(softly)* ...So. It's finally happened.

(Another scroll is produced. SEJANUS clears his throat.)

SEJANUS: I am instructed firstly to offer my condolences for your husband's loss. You shall be allowed a period of grieving, not to last more than one half hour.

BERENGARIA: Spare me that. The old fraud hadn't touched me in years. He was no husband to me.

SEJANUS: Then I am instructed secondly to place you under close arrest. Your husband was a false god. You are a false goddess. You shall be conveyed to a cell until the manner of your death shall be determined.

BERENGARIA: *(impatiently)* I know that very well. Well, come on then. Take me to your cell. Oaf.

SEJANUS: Take her, men.

(Swords are drawn from scabbards.)

Lead on.

(And BERENGARIA is marched out of the room. When the clanking of chainmail has receded:)

Lady Livilla, your husband is our new emperor, and our new god. According to tradition, you must be the one to devise the execution of your predecessor. Do you accept the role that destiny has given you?

LIVILLA: Oh yes. I don't think that should give me any great difficulty.

SEJANUS: Very good. My lady.

(And we hear him exit.)

LIVILLA: Well, musician. Play your lute.

(The music resumes, as before.)

Oh no. I think something a bit jollier than that. We're celebrating, after all.

(And, after a slight hesitation, we hear something more up tempo. Something ridiculously forced, sounding a bit like a German drinking song!)

That's better. That's nice.

Scene 3: INT.

The TARDIS swimming pool. Against the reassuring background hum of the ship in flight, we hear the soft voice of a killer ...

FROBISHER: That's it. That's the idea. Find somewhere to hide. But there is nowhere to hide. Is there? There's just you and me. The hunter. And the prey. Swim away as fast as you can, it makes no difference. Because there's no... escape... from me!

(Loud splashing. A little squeal.)

Now, hold still. Hold still, dammit! Okay. Shall I eat you

now? Or would you like to play some more?
(Another squeal.)
DOCTOR: *(outside the room)* Frobisher? Are you in there?
FROBISHER: Hey, Doc, can't it wait? I'm kind of busy at the moment...
(A door opens during the above line.)
DOCTOR: *(closer)* Oh, yes. So I can see.
(Awkward splashing, as FROBISHER repositions himself.)
FROBISHER: Hey, do you mind? What's a guy have to do to get some privacy round here?
DOCTOR: We're in trouble. The TARDIS is out of control.
FROBISHER: The TARDIS is always out of control. Is it worth interrupting my bath time? It's embarrassing, I'm all naked here...
DOCTOR: Frobisher, you're the shape of a penguin. You're always naked.
FROBISHER: That's what you think. I usually morph myself a black and white pair of pants as well.
DOCTOR: None of the controls are responding. It's as if the power's been drained elsewhere...
(A splash as the fish escapes FROBISHER. A squeal.)
What was that?
FROBISHER: What was what?
DOCTOR: Is that a gumblejack you have in there with you?
FROBISHER: *(over another squeal)* Well, it's a fish, at any rate. He didn't introduce himself.
DOCTOR: And you're hunting it.
FROBISHER: Yes.
DOCTOR: And going to kill it.
FROBISHER: That's the idea.
DOCTOR: How very cruel.
FROBISHER: Hey, don't make me feel guilty. Just because you prefer the taste of salad.
DOCTOR: There's no need for you to be hunting at all. There's a whole room down the corridor filled with cans of tuna.
(Splashing.)
FROBISHER: Oh, come on, Doc! That's no fun! I have to capture it myself, and eat it alive! I'm a penguin, for Pete's sake.
DOCTOR: No, you're not. You're a mesomorph. A shape shifter.
FROBISHER: Okay, so I'm not a real penguin. But that's fine, this isn't a real fish either.
(A squeal, as FROBISHER makes another launch at it. A loud splash.)
DOCTOR: What?
FROBISHER: Missed it! ...It's a 3D replica I got the TARDIS to conjure up for me. There are a whole heap of buttons on that console you don't do anything with, you know...
DOCTOR: *(quietly)* You haven't been playing with the dimensional stabilisers, have you?
FROBISHER: No. Well, possibly. Does it matter?
DOCTOR: Does it matter? The dimensional stabilisers give the TARDIS its structure and form. The walls, the floors, the air we breathe, it's constantly generated by the ship, held in balance, and checked and rechecked. It's the most difficult job a TARDIS has to do.

And you've been overriding them to make fish. No wonder the old girl is under a bit of a strain.
FROBISHER: Okay, okay, I'll eat the fish, problem solved.
(He splashes about.)
Hey, where did it go? It just vanished...
(We hear the TARDIS hum die down. As it does so:)
DOCTOR: Oh no...
FROBISHER: What's happening? Why has it gone so dark? ...Have I broken something?
DOCTOR: Worse than that, I'm afraid. The TARDIS has had enough. She's gone on strike.

Scene 4: INT
A corridor within the castle. Stone walls. SEJANUS marches BERENGARIA to the dungeons. We hear the sound of his chainmail and boots as he keeps step.

SEJANUS: Not much further now, madam.
BERENGARIA: *(coldly)* Thank you, Sejanus, I do know where the dungeons are. I have imprisoned enough people there in my lifetime.
SEJANUS: I'm sorry, madam. I meant no disrespect.
(A throat is cleared. SEJANUS stops dead, apprehensive.)
Who's there?
CHILDERIC: *(smoothly)* Mother, good day. What means this armed guard that waits upon your grace?
SEJANUS: My lord Childeric. I must ask you to come no closer. Lady Berengaria is a traitor and her life is forfeit.
BERENGARIA: Childeric, go away. You know perfectly well I'm being taken off to the dungeons for ritual torture and execution. It's annoying, but there it is. And I have no desire to spend the last painful protracted hours of my existence with one of my children, thank you very much.
CHILDERIC: Guard Captain Sejanus. Take pity on your prisoner. Allow her some final words of comfort from her loving son.
SEJANUS: You know I cannot do that, sir.
CHILDERIC: I'll make it worth your while. See here.
(A jingle of coins.)
There's a nice shiny gold coin for you.
SEJANUS: Well, if you put it like that...
CHILDERIC: Exactly. Now don't spend it all at once.
BERENGARIA: I don't want any words of comfort. Don't I get any say in this?
CHILDERIC: I wouldn't have thought so, mother...
SEJANUS: Of course not, you're just the prisoner...
BERENGARIA: Typical.
CHILDERIC: Wait over there, Sejanus. I would take my leave of my mother privately.
SEJANUS: Very well. But I can only give you a minute.
CHILDERIC: Oh, I think a minute will be ample, thank you.
(SEJANUS walks away. We hear the sound of his boots grow fainter, then stop.)
BERENGARIA: Oh, do go away, Childeric. You'll miss your brother's

coronation. I know how much you must be looking forward to it.
CHILDERIC: You've never liked me, have you, mother?
BERENGARIA: Good lord, no. What's there to like?
CHILDERIC: Oh, I understand. Nature has made me a bastard. I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks, I, that am deformed, unfinished, sent before my time into this breathing world. And so I am determined to prove a villain.
BERENGARIA: Which is exactly what I mean. I just don't think you've ever been villainous enough. You've always been a disappointment to me.
CHILDERIC: Oh.
BERENGARIA: And you showed so much promise. I remember the pleasure you took as a child, pulling the wings off flies. Where has all that evil gone, Childeric? You're illegitimate. You're a hunchback. Being evil is what you were born for.
CHILDERIC: And so I am, mother. You shall see. I intend to usurp the throne from my brother. And I shall be emperor and god instead.
BERENGARIA: Throughout history, the empress has given birth to two sons. One good, virtuous, heroic. The rightful heir to the throne. The other a bastard. Twisted and abhorrent. It's practically mythical. And who do I turn out? Your younger half-brother is a weak, stammering idiot. But I doubt even you have the stomach to overthrow him.
(A rattling of chains.)
Let go of my hand...!
CHILDERIC: Give me your blessing, mother.
BERENGARIA: Why?
CHILDERIC: You are the most evil person I have ever known. Cruel, callous, without a shred of feeling. I have tried to model myself on you. For years I have been hiding away in the crypts of this castle, plotting and scheming against nature and against God.
BERENGARIA: Hiding in crypts doesn't make you look evil, Childeric. Just rather sulky and antisocial.
(A rattling of chains as she pulls her hand away.)
CHILDERIC: And I have devised the perfect plan to seize command not only of the empire, but of the heavens themselves. And I shall rule forever.
BERENGARIA: I think it more likely that your brother shall reign. However insipid he is. When he is crowned today you shall kneel in obeisance, and be his subject.
CHILDERIC: You shall see, mother.
BERENGARIA: Well, I'll be dead. So it's all much of a muchness to me, frankly.
CHILDERIC: But you shall see all the same. News of my notoriety shall reach even the furthest depths of hell, where your black heart shall burn forever. ...Sejanus! You may take her away now.
(We hear SEJANUS approach.)
BERENGARIA: Yes. Take me away now.
SEJANUS: My lord. My lady.
CHILDERIC: This dungeon in which you are imprisoning my mother. It is dark, isn't it?
SEJANUS: The darkest there is, my lord. Not a trace of light.
CHILDERIC: And you will manacle her to the walls of this dungeon, won't you? Here's an extra coin for your trouble.

(Jingle of coins.)
SEJANUS: Thank you.
CHILDERIC: Die well, mother. Die long and slow.
BERENGARIA: You too, Childeric. When your time comes.
(BERENGARIA is led away by SEJANUS.)
CHILDERIC: But I shall make sure that it never does. Your evil was for so little, mother, if it has to die with you. The legacy of my evil shall be eternal.

Scene 5: INT.
The throne room. Much background bustle as preparations for the coronation are under way. There is, in the distance, a sound of a brass orchestra warming up. The faint echo of a great hall.

SCRIBE: Well, your highness. Your coronation awaits us. In less than one hour you shall be crowned the new emperor, and become the true living god of us all.
PEPIN: *(faintly)* Yes.
SCRIBE: Emperor Pepin VII, the illustrious son to emperor Pepin VI, and the no less illustrious grandson to emperor Pepin V. The last and greatest of the royal line of Pepins.
PEPIN: Well. Here's hoping.
SCRIBE: I was wondering if I could write down any great thoughts you might be having?
PEPIN: Great thoughts?
(The turning of pages in a heavy book.)
SCRIBE: You know. For the Bible. Something that might live for posterity.
(And the click as a ballpoint pen is turned on.)
PEPIN: Well. In truth. I'm just very very scared.
SCRIBE: Yes. I see...
PEPIN: What if I get all my lines wrong? What if I fall over during the ceremony, or faint, or throw up? I've been so nervous I've not been able to keep anything down since my father died...
SCRIBE: *(sighing)* Try to remember, your highness. These hours are the starting point for an entire new religion. I don't want to put, chapter one, verse one, our immortal master was very very scared.
PEPIN: But it's the truth.
(A moment's hesitation, then some scribbling.)
SCRIBE: How about I write that you're stolidly apprehensive?
PEPIN: There's very little that's stolid about it. I've been trying hard to have great thoughts, scribe. I've been frowning hard until it really hurts, but nothing springs to mind. But I don't officially become a god until the crown is placed on my head, do I?
(SCRIBE is too busy scribbling away. As soon as he stops, he reads.)
SCRIBE: *(quoting)* 'And at the moment of coronation comes deification, and the crown of empire burns all mortality away, and the new monarch becomes divine'. Something like that anyway.
PEPIN: *(happily)* Then that's all right. I shouldn't be thinking like a god yet. I'm sure all my great thoughts will pop up at the right time.
(Scribbling resumes.)

SCRIBE: God was showing signs of stolid optimism...
CLOVIS: Your majesty?
SCRIBE: ...When he was joined by High Priest Clovis.
CLOVIS: Leave us, scribe. I would be alone with our new master.
SCRIBE: Certainly. I can improvise the rest of the chapter anyway.
(And we hear him go, muttering happily to himself.)
CLOVIS: How are you feeling, your highness?
PEPIN: I'm very very...
CLOVIS: Very very scared, yes, of course you are. I was present when your father was made a god. And he was every bit as awkward and pathetic as you are now.
PEPIN: It's hard to believe my father was ever scared of anything. He should still be our god. He'd be much better at it than me.
CLOVIS: But, alas, that's impossible. Your father committed the ultimate blasphemy.
PEPIN: What's that?
CLOVIS: He died. Gods really aren't supposed to do that sort of thing.
(A lone, and rather feeble, blast of a trumpet out of the orchestra warm-up.)
Don't worry, your highness, I'm sure you're every inch the real omnipotent creator we thought your father was.
PEPIN: I know the traditions, Clovis. It is said that every coronation is accompanied by some great miracle.
CLOVIS: That is true.
PEPIN: Care must be taken of my subjects. I wouldn't want them to be killed in an earthquake or anything.
CLOVIS: Don't worry. The miracle is well in hand.
PEPIN: I have decided to be a very benevolent god, Clovis. And try to be nice to everyone.
CLOVIS: And I'm sure it does you great credit. If you will excuse me.
PEPIN: *(his voice fading away, as CLOVIS leaves him chatting away)* Yes, of course, I know you have lots and lots to attend to. Oh well, I'll see you during the ceremony, I suppose...
CLOVIS: *(muttering)* God protect us...
CHILDERIC: *(softly)* Ah, high priest. And what great miracle have you got lined up for us tonight?
CLOVIS: *(stiffly)* You'll have to wait and see, Childeric. But rest assured, everything has been arranged.
CHILDERIC: Don't you mean stage managed? What's it going to be this time? I hope it's going to be better than when my father was made god. Pulling a rabbit out of a hat.
CLOVIS: I think you'll find the official text says the deification was accompanied by an earthquake.
CHILDERIC: Oh, I know what the Bible says. But I've heard the rumours. I'm sure that whatever you do, that idiot scribe will make it halfway apocalyptic. Come on, Clovis. Give me a sneak preview. I'm hoping this time you'll saw a lady in half. Now that'd be spectacular.
CLOVIS: I have things to attend to.
CHILDERIC: *(urgently)* You know that the ceremony is a fake, Clovis!

That dribbling fool is not a god, will never be a god! We must look elsewhere for our leaders. You know that. Of all the people here, you know it better than anyone!
CLOVIS: I must go... I have things to... I must go.
CHILDERIC: *(quietly, to himself)* You know it.

Scene 6: INT.
The TARDIS console room. But there is no familiar background hum.

FROBISHER: If the TARDIS is on strike, what are we supposed to do? Negotiate with her?
DOCTOR: I don't know. It's never happened before. Shine the torch over there, on the console.
(A loud click as the torch is activated.)
FROBISHER: I've never seen the TARDIS look so dead.
DOCTOR: She's not dead, only sulking. Come on, old thing. After all the centuries we've been together, don't walk out on me now. We'll do better, I promise.
(The background hum rises for a moment, hopefully. Then drains away. Silence.)
FROBISHER: So much for negotiations. Now what?
DOCTOR: Not much else we can do. We'll have to give in to her demands.
FROBISHER: Which are what, exactly?
DOCTOR: Look at the console. All the panels have stopped working.
(We hear him press dead buttons and switches with dull thuds. Then he hits one which gives a feeble bleep. Excitedly:)
Except for this one... torch...
(Another, different bleep.)
And that one over there. ...Oh dear.
FROBISHER: And what do they do?
DOCTOR: The TARDIS is tired of being taken for granted. She wants me to surrender autonomous control directly to her. From now on, she'll be the one who'll be in charge.
FROBISHER: So she'll just materialise wherever she wants, and we won't have a clue where we're going. Don't think we'll have much trouble adapting to that.
(The DOCTOR drums his fingers over the console nervously.)
DOCTOR: Or she could reduce the interior dimensions to the width of an atom. Or simply eject us into the vortex. Whatever she wants.
FROBISHER: Oh.
DOCTOR: ...Let's just hope she'll materialise wherever she wants, and we won't have a clue where we're going.
(And with a decisive slap of the console, he stops finger drumming.)
We'll have to disable the manual circuits together, you push that button over there, when I pull... this lever, I think.
FROBISHER: All this fuss because I was cruel to a fish. It wasn't even as if it were real.
DOCTOR: It was sentient, wasn't it? It felt fear, it felt pain...
FROBISHER: Well, sure, the hunt's no good without the fear or the pain...

DOCTOR: If it thought it was real, who are you to say it wasn't?
FROBISHER: Oh, Doc, come on. I created it. It had no life beyond what I had given it in the first place.
DOCTOR: *(sighing)* Frobisher. After all the adventures we've had. It doesn't matter to whom the cruelty is directed, the cruelty itself is wrong. If you haven't learned that, you haven't learned anything.
FROBISHER: Doc, fascinating as the metaphysics may be, you're really just trying to put off pulling that lever, aren't you?
DOCTOR: Yes.
FROBISHER: We have to do it together?
DOCTOR: On the count of three. One, two, three!
FROBISHER: Now!
(A couple of bleeps and blips. And the controls him back to life. The familiar sound of the TARDIS in flight. The DOCTOR sighs with relief.)
And now what?
DOCTOR: Well, we're still alive. So far so good. Now we'll just wait and see where the ship wants to take us.

Scene 7: INT.
The throne room. Lots of expectant muttering. The orchestra is still tuning up, much more successfully by now. There is a baton struck a couple of times by a conductor, and the music falls silent. The crowd follow suit.
The SCRIBE whispers confidentially, as he reads what he writes. We hear the scribbling.
Once again, there is the echo of a great hall.

SCRIBE: And at last the hour of the coronation had arrived. And the congregation had been gathering in the throne room for the past two days, and they were sore relieved, because they had been getting sore impatient. And Pepin, looking imperious in his stolid apprehension, was joined by his beautiful consort Livilla.
(A single blast of trumpets in unison.)
PEPIN: Oh, hello, my dear.
LIVILLA: *(quietly)* Now, don't you get this ceremony wrong, Pepin. All right? I want to be empress. I've earned the right to be empress, being handmaiden to your bitch of a mother these last few years.
PEPIN: I'll try my hardest, I promise you.
(At length, under her speech, a quiet but fast beat of drums is heard.)
LIVILLA: You better had. Because I want a crown, and I want it crammed with the most beautiful diamonds and emeralds and bits of shiny metal that can be found. Ever since we were married I've been waiting to be goddess to these stinking people. And you're not going to spoil it for me now.
(We hear the swish of a heavy dress as both begin to walk up the aisle. And out of the drums, still continuing but louder, full ceremonial music starts. Brass and strident)
SCRIBE: And lo, the empress took the emperor's hand. And lo, they walked slowly down the aisle towards their thrones.
PEPIN: Isn't it exciting, dear? It's just like our wedding day.
LIVILLA: Thank you, Pepin. That's one bad memory I didn't need reminding of.

(The brass stops playing, leaving the drums beating excitedly underneath.)

SCRIBE: And Clovis, the high priest, bade the couple sit down upon their thrones.

(We hear the crumple of heavy robes as they relax.)

And they did so. And he took the crown and lifted it above the young king's head, saying:

CLOVIS: I consecrate you as our new emperor. You will be the heart of the nation, you will be the soul of its people. And you will be our immortal god, and shall always have been so. The mysteries of the future shall be known to you, the secrets of the past shall have been your creation. For in you all times shall meet and be as one, you shall be at once infinite. All hail Pepin VII, our new emperor, and our everlasting god!

(Jubilant trumpet blasts. The crowd shout over them.)

CROWD: All hail the emperor! All hail our god! All hail the emperor! All hail our god!

SCRIBE: *(confidentially, whispering to the listeners over the sound - we still hear his scribbling)* And a new god was born as the crown was brought down upon his head.

(A muted, distant gasp of concern...)

And, oops, it wobbled a bit there, but it's all right, he's got it.

(The trumpets blast again, more excited than ever.)

CLOVIS: And now, behold! A new miracle!

SCRIBE: And the crowd were sore expectant.

CLOVIS: *(throwing off a little of the religious fervour, and with more of the pace of a stage magician)* All right. A pack of playing cards, just an ordinary pack of playing cards. Nothing special about them at all. Now, if I could just ask his omnipotence, pick a card. Any card. Don't tell me what it is, and then put it back anywhere in the pack. That's it. Now, I'll shuffle them all.

(We hear the shuffling. The drum beat turns into a drum roll.)

Now, tell me, all-powerful creator, do you remember the card you selected?

PEPIN: Yes. Yes, I do.

CLOVIS: And was it by any chance... the three of clubs?

PEPIN: Yes! Yes, it was!

(And the trumpets blast with more excitement than ever. They're obviously having a great time. The crowd applaud.)

...He really is very good, isn't he?

(Above the applause from the CROWD:)

CLOVIS: Behold! A new miracle! Witness the power of our god, o mortals, and tremble! And I call upon our majesty to favour us with his inaugural address.

(The audience fall quiet. The drums stop. A blast on a trumpet. Short pause. Quietly:)

That's you, o lord.

(And we hear quiet muttering again. The same trumpet blast, except it now has a rather impatient edge to it.)

LIVILLA: Go on! Get on with it...!

PEPIN: *(clearing his throat nervously)* Right. Erm. Hello. Can

you all hear me at the back? Can you all...
(The crowd muttering dies down slowly.)
Right. I stand before you now as your god, your supreme authority in this world and the next. My word is law.
(The trumpets play a single blast.)
My will is absolute.
(A double blast.)
My desires shall be your doings, your desires shall be as nothing before my own.
(And the trumpets continue to play authoritatively as he continues.)
For you are my slaves, my creatures, now and always. ...Look, sorry, can we just stop a moment, erm... No, stop...
(And the music winds down. There is puzzled muttering from the crowd.)
Those are the words with which my father became your god, and his father before him, and his father before him. Though there may have been a few more 'thou's and 'thee's, the language was a little more archaic... Anyway. The point is this. It isn't true, I'm afraid.
(We hear consternation in the distance.)
Not any of it. Back when Clovis put the crown on my head, I was really expecting to be transformed into a god, to have all my mortal parts burned away, and so forth. I was, honestly. But I feel exactly the same. I thought I felt the twinge of something divine for a moment, but I think it was just indigestion - I've been having trouble keeping food down lately. So the ceremony hasn't worked, I'm still just as mortal as the rest of you.
(He now has to speak noticeably louder over the growing disquiet from his audience.)
I'll still be your emperor if you like, but I expect you don't want one without the other, and I really can't be your god. So, sorry, everybody, basically. And I hope you'll find it in your hearts to put me to death as painlessly as possible.
SCRIBE: *(after a few seconds' hesitation)* This hadn't happened before.
CHILDERIC: *(angrily, as if from the back of the crowd)* His own words condemn him! He is not our god!
PEPIN: *(mildly)* Well, exactly, that's the point I've been making...
CHILDERIC: Death to the apostate! Death to the false god and his wife!
(And the crowd respond to his words with angry cries of agreement.)
LIVILLA: *(flatly)* Well, that's great, Pepin. You've killed us.
CHILDERIC: You all know me! I am the late emperor's other son! The illegitimate one. The bastard. But I say that the divinity has passed to me! I am your new emperor! I am your new god.
PEPIN: Sorry, my dear.
LIVILLA: Don't even talk to me.
CHILDERIC: If Pepin can deny that he is a heretic, let him give us another miracle now! And a better one than last time! If not, let him pay with his life right now!
(Underneath the cries and jeers:)
LIVILLA: Last time I try to get power by marrying a moron.

(And then, over the shouts, the sound of the TARDIS materialising. The crowd fall silent, stunned.)

Scene 8: INT.
The TARDIS console room. A familiar bleep as the console stops moving. The hum of the TARDIS no longer in flight.

FROBISHER: We've landed. Do you think the TARDIS could at least show us where we are?
(The scanner operates. Ironically:)
Thank you.
(We hear a sound like static.)
DOCTOR: We've landed nowhere. It's just void...
FROBISHER: No, wait. The picture's clearing.
(And the static fades. What it's replaced with is the sound of the throne room outside played quietly through the scanner. We can hear the crowd still muttering with surprise.)
Doesn't look too promising, does it?
DOCTOR: It seems to be some sort of medieval castle.
(Flicking dead switches:)
Why did you want to come here, old girl? It hardly looks like the sort of place where you'll get some TLC...
FROBISHER: Everyone's staring at us.
DOCTOR: Yes, we're a little more conspicuous than I'd have liked. Still, never mind. We'll just have to hope they're pleased to see us.
(He takes confident steps around the console.)
FROBISHER: You're going outside? Has it occurred to you if we leave the TARDIS there's nothing to stop it from taking off and stranding us here forever?
(The door opens.)
DOCTOR: I don't think she's offering us a choice. After you, Frobisher. Best flipper forward.

Scene 9: INT.
The throne room. As before, with awed, quiet muttering from the crowd. From the outside the TARDIS door is heard to open, and those voices fall silent.

FROBISHER: *(warily)* Okay, guys, now before any of you do anything hasty or violent...
(And the crowd mutter again. Various people speak out from the excited babble.)
CROWD 1: It's a bird!
FROBISHER: Erm... yeah.
CROWD 2: It talks!
CROWD 3: *(with a jubilant cry)* It's a miracle!
(Gasps and cries of joy as others reach the same conclusion. Then they all fall silent as one.)
FROBISHER: ...Hello? ...Doc, you better take a look at this...
CROWD 4: Here comes another one!
CROWD 1: Is it a bird?
CROWD 4: ...Nah, it's just a man.

(A few groans of disappointment.)
FROBISHER: Doc. They're all on their knees before us.
DOCTOR: Mmm. Perhaps they've all dropped something...
CROWD: *(severally)* It's the miracle we were promised! They're angels from heaven! Worship them!
DOCTOR: See, Frobisher? They are pleased to see us.
FROBISHER: That one doesn't look pleased.
CHILDERIC: *(from some distance away, loudly)* Who are you? Demons from hell? How dare you interrupt my insurrection!
DOCTOR: No, he isn't pleased at all, is he?
LIVILLA: *(again, at some distance)* You asked for a miracle, Childeric! And there it is!
CHILDERIC: But you all heard Pepin! He said he wasn't a god!
CLOVIS: *(uncertainly)* Perhaps he was testing our faith. Was that it, o lord?
PEPIN: No, I'm afraid not, I'm as surprised as the rest of you...
LIVILLA: Shut up, you idiot.
CLOVIS: *(his voice louder, as he comes closer. We hear his footsteps.)* We shall ask the strangers. Were you sent to us from heaven?
DOCTOR: No, really, we're just travellers...
CLOVIS: Silence. I am addressing your master, the big talking bird. Well? Are you emissaries of God?
FROBISHER: ...As the Doc says. No.
CHILDERIC: Then you shall die!
(And swords are pulled from scabbards.)
FROBISHER: Or, to put it another way. Yes.
CLOVIS: And you were summoned to prove the divinity of the emperor Pepin?
FROBISHER: What, the guy on the throne? Absolutely.
(And, gratefully, the music plays again.)
PEPIN: *(miserably)* But I'm not a god!
LIVILLA: Pepin! What do you think you're doing??
PEPIN: No, Livilla! It's the truth! I wanted to be your god. But I'm not. I'm sorry.
(And the music dies down. With some obvious frustration. The crowd mutters.)
CHILDERIC: Kill them.
CLOVIS: *(reluctantly)* Yes, kill them.
SCRIBE: *(from a distance)* No! You must stop! You have no right!
CHILDERIC: Who are you to stop us? Come forward!
(The crowd fall silent as we hear nervous, shuffling footsteps.)
...It's only the court scribe! A pen pusher with no power at all!
SCRIBE: *(nervously)* I am the keeper of the old texts. And I tell you. After the emperor has been consecrated, it is recorded that he always suffers from a period of mental exhaustion. Rather than condemning him, the confusion our emperor shows now confirms that he has become god!
DOCTOR: Well, that stands to reason. Being made immortal like that, it's bound to take it out of you. Let me through, there. I'm a doctor. That's right...

(And the DOCTOR and FROBISHER move their way up the aisle. The crowd mutters as they're jostled aside.)

PEPIN: *(more to himself, his voice clearer now we're closer to him)* It is true that I'm very tired... Could I have become god after all?

LIVILLA: *(muttering)* I should be so lucky...

FROBISHER: We should get you somewhere you can rest.

PEPIN: Yes. Take me away from this place.

(A creak as he rises from the throne.)

Will you accompany me, Livilla?

LIVILLA: You've always humiliated me at social gatherings, Pepin. But today you nearly got me killed. That really is going too far.

(A swish of heavy fabric.)

I shall be in my own quarters. With a very large headache.

PEPIN: Well, that's fair enough...

(We hear her voice recede as she goes, her heavy garments still audible.)

LIVILLA: Out of the way there. I'm the empress, I am! So move it!

DOCTOR: Are you ready, your majesty?

PEPIN: Thank you. There's a little room just down there...

FROBISHER: Stand aside for the emperor! ...What's your name again?

PEPIN: Pepin VII.

FROBISHER: Stand aside for Emperor Pepin VII! Stand aside!

(And the crowd fall silent expectantly.)

...You. Whoever you are. Let us pass.

CHILDERIC: I am Childeric. The rightful heir to this throne and all its power.

FROBISHER: I don't care who you are, bud. You're blocking the way.

(The crowd murmur angrily. Short pause)

CHILDERIC: I shall not forget this. It will take more than an oversized bird to deny me my true legacy!

(And we hear him stride away. His final line fades as he goes.)

CLOVIS: *(clapping his hands)* Musicians! Why are you not playing? Our majesty is leaving the throne room!

(There are a few groans from the orchestra.)

Trumpets! Sound for your new god!

(And the ceremony music resumes. Over eagerly, a little breathless as he joins the train:)

Can I be of any assistance, your omnipotence?

FROBISHER: I wouldn't have thought so. You wanted him dead five minutes ago!

CLOVIS: But that's when I believed he wasn't our god.

DOCTOR: I'd have thought the prerequisite of a high priest is to have a little faith. Sounds like you're unsuited for the job.

PEPIN: The big talking bird and his servant will attend us whilst we rest.

SCRIBE: And me, your majesty. I will need to record your slumbers for posterity.

PEPIN: And the court scribe. Nobody else may enter.

CLOVIS: But I'm the high priest!

FROBISHER: He said, nobody else.

PEPIN: Please. Leave us.

(And a door shuts firmly.)
CLOVIS: ...Of course, sire. Whatever god wills. ...Guard Captain Sejanus!
(We hear the chainmail approach of SEJANUS. He stands smartly to attention.)
SEJANUS: Yes, sir!
CLOVIS: Is everything ready for the next stage of the ritual?
SEJANUS: Yes, sir. I shall carry out the deed myself tonight.
CLOVIS: Good. Do it well, Sejanus. Remember. The eyes of tradition are on you.
SEJANUS: Yes, sir.
CLOVIS: But first... Clear this rabble away. The show's over for now.
SEJANUS: Sir.
(And we hear SEJANUS move away, and stir the still muttering crowd.)

Scene 10: INT.
Pepin's quarters. In contrast to the previous scene, all is quiet. We hear distant scribbling, and the relaxed breathing of PEPIN in sleep.

FROBISHER: *(softly)* ...He's asleep at last. He seems very weak, Doc. What's the matter with him?
DOCTOR: Just completely exhausted, I think. From the look of him, I don't think he's slept or eaten in days. He'll be all right.
SCRIBE: *(happily, to himself, a little distance away)* And lo, a blue box appeared out of thin air, and out stepped a big monochromatic bird, and, in contrast, a man dressed in every colour that could be conceived.
(A bit louder, as the DOCTOR approaches him.)
Oh, this is excellent stuff, I couldn't have done better myself...!
DOCTOR: We're glad you approve, Mr...
SCRIBE: Tacitus. Eugene Tacitus. Hello.
(Shaking of hands, grunt of acknowledgement from FROBISHER.)
Oh yes, your arrival was a perfect miracle. I was going to put in a volcano or a plague of locusts, but this is far better!
FROBISHER: What are you? Some sort of journalist?
SCRIBE: I'm the court scribe. I chronicle everything that happens here.
FROBISHER: *(dismissively, returning to PEPIN)* Yeah. A journalist.
DOCTOR: I get the impression he's rather more than that...
SCRIBE: I'm the man who writes the Bible.
FROBISHER: *(a little distance away)* What? As in, Holy Bible?
SCRIBE: Chapter and verse, that's me. Well, someone has to do it. Your arrival here was foretold, you know.
DOCTOR: *(curious)* Was it? Was it really?
SCRIBE: Well, it will have been, when I finish writing it up.
(He taps on the front cover of a hardback book meaningfully, then flips a few pages.)
DOCTOR: I see. I dare say a lot of things which happen are foretold.
SCRIBE: Oh, only when they're unusual. I find I don't have to

write awkward explanations if I say it was all predestined.
(The SCRIBE has resumed his scribbling.)
DOCTOR: You saved our lives back there. Thank you.
SCRIBE: *(absently, as he works)* Possibly. It all depends if you and the bird really are immortal or not.
FROBISHER: Yes...
SCRIBE: To be honest, I'm keeping that part of the account a little vague for the moment. Either way, if you live or die, I'll say it was foretold. People feel reassured that way.

Scene 11: INT.
Deep in the castle vaults. There is some echo, and the sound of dripping water.

CHILDERIC: Arnulf! Do not be afraid. It is your master. Come out of hiding. Show yourself to me.
(We hear heavy footsteps on stone.)
Have you fed him? Have you fed my little boy?
(A grunt from ARNULF. Gently:)
Do not try to speak, my friend. It will only cause you pain. Nod if you have done what I have asked.
(Movement on stone, as ARNULF shifts position.)
...Good. It takes a while to adjust, I know. When I employed your father, it took him years to lose the instinct to talk. But it will get easier. By the time he died, it was as if he had forgotten he had once had a tongue to remove. And you will come to feel the same.
(A more muted grunt from ARNULF.)
Ssh, I know, I know. I am glad that you are the one who has replaced him. A son should succeed his father, it is his right. Just as I shall follow my father. And my son shall follow me.
(Underneath the last sentence, we hear the wary shuffle of footsteps on stone. A warning grunt from ARNULF.)
Who's there? Who has followed me down here?
(The footsteps stop dead. A knife is drawn.)
Come out of the shadows.
(Movement on stone.)
...Well. The high priest himself. And have you come to condemn me for treason, Clovis? Or to help me destroy our new emperor?
CLOVIS: *(quietly)* Do you swear that you can do it? You believe you can kill God?
CHILDERIC: With your help, yes. And we shall destroy his angels from the blue box as well.

Scene 12: INT.
Pepin's quarters. As before. The SCRIBE is happily scribbling away, by PEPIN's bedside. We hear PEPIN breathing heavily. We hear them both somewhat in the distance.

SCRIBE: *(happily)* And lo, the new emperor still slept, and the style of his sleep was imperial indeed...
(Over this, hushed, closer to the audience:)

FROBISHER: Doc, do you think we could just leave? Persuade the TARDIS to take us somewhere else?
DOCTOR: No. There's a reason she wanted to come here. We must find out what it is. Besides, you're doing very well for yourself. Play your cards right and you could be the new high priest.
FROBISHER: Thanks, but no thanks. Been there, done that. As a private eye, I've often had to morph into the shape of the clergy. I went undercover as a vicar once for a while, turned out I had an allergy to dog collars. Had a rash on my throat for months...
GUARD: *(outside the door)* You can't go in there...
(And a grunt of pain.)
DOCTOR: There's trouble.
(And the door is battered.)
SCRIBE: Your majesty! Wake up!
PEPIN: What? What is it?
(And bursts open.)
Sejanus! What are you doing? I ordered that no-one be allowed to enter here!
DOCTOR: He's got a gun! I thought you all used swords here!
SCRIBE: We do. But traditionally guns are the weapons of choice for all the important assassinations.
FROBISHER: Assassinations?!
SEJANUS: If you truly are our immortal god, then you shan't feel the bullets when I shoot you.
(A gun is cocked.)
And if you're not, so dies a heretic.
PEPIN: That is very true. Shoot me and we'll see.
FROBISHER: No, wait...!
SEJANUS: To death! Or to life eternal!
(There is a loud gunshot.)
FROBISHER: No!!

End of Part One

PART TWO

Scene 12, Recap:

SEJANUS: If you truly are our immortal god, then you shan't feel the bullets when I shoot you.
(A gun is cocked.)
And if you're not, so dies a heretic.
PEPIN: That's very true. Shoot me and we'll see.
FROBISHER: No, wait...!
SEJANUS: To death! Or to life eternal!
(There is a loud gunshot.)
FROBISHER: No!!
(The sound echoes for a few seconds. When it has died away:)
PEPIN: *(with great dignity)* And yet I live, and yet I breathe. You cannot spill my blood. For the blood that pumps through my veins is not mortal. Do you accept?
SEJANUS: I accept.
PEPIN: I am your god. The weapons of mere men cannot hurt me, nor their opinions sway my awful judgement. For I am your master, reigning supreme and eternal.
FROBISHER: What are you talking about?
DOCTOR: Ssh, Frobisher, this is interesting.
PEPIN: Do you accept?
SEJANUS: I accept. You are our god, reigning forever, reigning supreme, amen.
PEPIN: Give me your gun.
SEJANUS: Here, sire. My life is forfeit.
(The gun is cocked.)
PEPIN: Your gun is in my hands. Your life is in my hands.
FROBISHER: But you can't...!
DOCTOR: Ssh!
(And the gun is cocked back.)
PEPIN: I forgive your attempt on our life. For you are our agent, proving I cannot die. And to this end, I shall give unto you the imperial coin as a sign of forgiveness.
(Short pause. He whispers awkwardly, breaking the ceremonial grandeur:)
Scribe! I don't have one!
SCRIBE: Sorry, sire?
PEPIN: I don't have a spare coin! I wasn't ready...
(A hasty jingle of money.)
SCRIBE: Here you are...
PEPIN: Thanks.
(Back into character:)
Take this and go with our divine blessing. Do you accept?
SEJANUS: I accept, my lord, my emperor, my god. I depart as your subject, I depart as your slave.
(We hear his heavy chainmail as he walks away. Then, from a distance, softly:)

Amen.
(A sigh of relief from PEPIN.)
PEPIN: Thank God that that's all over. Which is me, isn't it? Thank me.
SCRIBE: Well done, your omnipotence. That was word perfect.
PEPIN: Except for that bit with the coin. Damn it, I should have been better prepared...
FROBISHER: Do you mean that was all a ceremony?
DOCTOR: Of course.
SCRIBE: The ritual of the coronation is always followed by the ritual of the assassination attempt. Has been since time immemorial.
FROBISHER: Well, I wish you could have warned me. My flippers are still palpitating.
DOCTOR: Oh, you faint-hearted penguin. I'm sure there was no real danger. May I have the gun, your majesty?
(A shuffle of footsteps. The gun is opened with a click.)
...As I thought, you see. Blanks.
SCRIBE: So there you are, sire. Your inauguration is complete. Congratulations. I'm going to write it up immediately...
(The book is opened. Scribbling starts underneath PEPIN's lines.)
PEPIN: *(sighing)* That's all very well. But I still don't feel like a god. Perhaps the assassin should have used real bullets after all.
SCRIBE: Majesty, no-one has used bullets for hundreds of years. Besides, it's unnecessary. You're a god, so they couldn't harm you. So we might just as well shoot blanks to prove you can't die.
DOCTOR: Well done, Eugene. An excellent syllogism. You'd make a politician. You see, Frobisher? In age-old ceremonies like this, no-one need die.
(Off to the side of the action, we hear bits of wood drop to the floor as FROBISHER steps over the broken door.)
FROBISHER: ...Oh yeah? Doc, you better take a look at the guards out here.
(The DOCTOR goes to join him. More clatter of broken door.)
DOCTOR: *(slowly)* Knife blow to the heart. And this poor chap's the same.
(And we hear the DOCTOR march angrily back into the room.)
...What is the meaning of this? Is this part of your sacred ritual?
(The scribbling stops.)
SCRIBE: *(surprised)* Is there a problem, Doctor?
PEPIN: They're only guards, after all...
DOCTOR: *(cold fury)* Let me give you a piece of advice, your majesty. If you want to be god, you'd better find a way to start caring for the people who worship you.
PEPIN: *(simply)* But that's just it, Doctor. I don't want to be god.
SCRIBE: The guards have to die for the ritual to make any sense. The new god cannot be killed because he is immortal. Be fair. The guards can't be immortal too, can they?
DOCTOR: And you condone this?
SCRIBE: It's not a question of condoning! It's what's written in the old texts.
DOCTOR: And before they sacrificed their lives to antiquated

tradition, did these guards happen to read your old texts?
SCRIBE: *(a little sulkily)* Well, they only had to ask. But no-one's interested in history nowadays.
DOCTOR: I'm interested. You'd better show me before anybody else gets killed. Do you have a library of some sort?
SCRIBE: Yes, of some sort.
DOCTOR: Frobisher, you stay here with Pepin. If I'm right, you should be perfectly safe, there'd be no point in playing the same ritual twice.
FROBISHER: And if you're wrong?
DOCTOR: Then I'm wrong, aren't I? Come on, Eugene, lead the way.
(The clatter as two men pick their way over the broken door. The voices fading:)
SCRIBE: Oh dear, Doctor, did you have to leave the guards face upwards...
DOCTOR: *(faintly)* Let's see what this library of yours has to offer...
FROBISHER: Thanks, Doc. That's very reassuring.

Scene 13: INT.
The castle vaults. As before.

CHILDERIC: You have too many scruples, Clovis. Really, it's hardly a quality one looks for in a conspirator to treason and murder.
CLOVIS: My family have been high priests to the royal family since records began. I cannot betray my god lightly.
(We hear a macabre gurgle from ARNULF.)
What is that tongueless slave of yours doing?
CHILDERIC: Arnulf is laughing at you, Clovis. He may be from the lowest dregs of society. But even he knows the reputation of your family.
CLOVIS: What do you mean? Tell him to stop laughing, or I swear I'll...
CHILDERIC: Arnulf. That's enough.
(And the laughter stops.)
Both your father and your grandfather plotted against their respective gods. Your family is notorious for being corrupt and treacherous.
CLOVIS: And they were both executed for their crimes as well. I have no desire to end up as they did, suspended from a hangman's gibbet.
CHILDERIC: There, at least, your scruples are in accord with my own. But I have devised a plot which cannot fail.
CLOVIS: We cannot attack Pepin directly. Now he is a god, he cannot be killed.
CHILDERIC: Not by mortal hand, certainly. But who knows what damage another god could do to him?
CLOVIS: Another god? I don't understand...
CHILDERIC: All will become clear, high priest.
(And he laughs. And ARNULF laughs with him.)
Just do as we have agreed.

CLOVIS: Very well. I shall bring him to you directly.
(We hear him exit, footsteps on stone. ARNULF's laughter echoes after him.)

Scene 14: INT.
Pepin's quarters.

FROBISHER: How are you feeling now, your highness?
PEPIN: Oh. Entirely back to normal.
FROBISHER: That's good.
PEPIN: Not really. I don't think that my normal is all that impressive, probably... Please, don't call me highness.
FROBISHER: Pepin then.
PEPIN: Pepin, that's it. Believe me, it's not a name I'm going to be called very often now that I'm an emperor and a god.
FROBISHER: I know the feeling. It's been so long since I heard my real name, I sometimes forget what it is. But my friends call me Frobisher.
(We hear the clatter as someone picks their way over the broken door.)
LIVILLA: ...What's been going on, there are dead bodies out here...
PEPIN: Nothing important, my dear. Just the ritual assassination attempt.
LIVILLA: *(louder, now she is in the room)* Oh. I trust my divine husband has recovered from the ceremony.
PEPIN: Frobisher, this is the wife.
FROBISHER: Good choice. Very nice.
PEPIN: *(quietly)* Wives to the imperial family are selected because of their looks rather than their personalities.
LIVILLA: And now perhaps my divine husband can tell me what in His name is going on? What was that stunt at the coronation all about?
(With a sigh, PEPIN sits down on the bed. There is a creak.)
PEPIN: I don't feel like a god.
LIVILLA: Of course you don't feel like a god. Look at yourself. It'd be a miracle if you even felt like a man. Heaven knows how we're going to produce you an heir.
PEPIN: Livilla, my dear, listen to me...
LIVILLA: No, you listen to me.
(She paces. High heels tap smartly on stone.)
We both know you can't be a god, you're just a pusillanimous little nobody. But it would take no effort on your part to pretend. The people are already worshipping you. They are building statues in your honour, and decorating your new blue temple with garlands of flowers.
PEPIN: Livilla. I cannot in all conscience rule my people as god knowing I am as weak and powerless as I ever was. I will abdicate.
(LIVILLA's footsteps stop dead.)
LIVILLA: Then they will kill you.
PEPIN: Yes.
LIVILLA: Worse, they will kill us. I shall not become a martyr to a man I have never loved. If you force me, I shall join Childeric and Clovis in rebellion against you.

FROBISHER: You've already got a rebellion against you?
PEPIN: It was only a matter of time. The bastard half-brother always tries to overthrow the new god. And the high priest always sides with him. And when he is defeated and executed, his son is made high priest in his stead.
FROBISHER: Why?
PEPIN: It's tradition. I suppose it is a bit silly, come to think of it.
LIVILLA: I need to know where I stand. Are you my husband, and my god? Or shall I be forced to take up arms against you?
PEPIN: I'm sorry, my dear. But I can't be all-powerful. Not even for you.
LIVILLA: Very well. Next time we meet, I shall kill you.
(She exits. High heels on stone.)
PEPIN: Never get married, Frobisher.
FROBISHER: Hey, I'm way ahead of you. Tried it once, didn't work out. That's the problem with being a shape shifter. She said I wasn't the Ogron she'd fallen in love with. ...So what do we do? Predictably, our lives are in danger again.
(PEPIN rises from the bed with a creak.)
PEPIN: Well, we can take sanctuary in the blue temple Livilla mentioned. No-one would dare to strike against us there.
FROBISHER: And what is this blue temple of yours?
PEPIN: I really don't know. Shall we go and see?

Scene 15: INT.
The scribe's bedroom. We hear a creak as an old door opens.

SCRIBE: Here we are, Doctor. Forgive the mess. And the smell, actually. I don't get many visitors... I'll try to clear a space for you...
(He bustles round, picking things up, putting them down. General clatter.)
DOCTOR: I thought you said you had some sort of library.
SCRIBE: Well. It is some sort of library.
DOCTOR: It's your bedroom. You keep these sacred texts in your bedroom?
SCRIBE: No-one in court's much of a reader. Never have been. For generations my ancestors have been writing these Bibles, then rewriting them from scratch when a god dies and we have to find another. We try to record every last thing our messiah says and does. And no-one's ever been much interested. But we keep them close in case anyone ever asks to look.
DOCTOR: As doorstops, and to balance uneven tables?
SCRIBE: Got to put the sum of all human knowledge to some use. Don't pick up that one, it...
(And there's a crash as a table falls over.)
DOCTOR: Sorry.
SCRIBE: Please, please, Doctor. Sit down over here, shift these old volumes, that's it. And read whatever takes your fancy. Here, try this. This is the Bible of Pepin III.
(The sound of a heavy volume dumped in his lap. The DOCTOR grunts.)
DOCTOR: And when did he reign?

SCRIBE: Oh, centuries ago, I should imagine. They're all in a bit of a jumble, I'm afraid. I tend to forget who succeeded whom.
(The DOCTOR flicks through some pages, then reads.)
DOCTOR: 'And on the fifteenth day since the last ritual of the Bath, Pepin III decided to take another. And he did immerse himself in warm water, and play about his body with soap. And the people were sore relieved, for he had begun to smell a bit.'
(He closes the book with a thud.)
Are they all like this?
SCRIBE: Oh yes. Every detail of their lives, recorded for posterity. What exactly were you looking for, Doctor?
DOCTOR: Anything. Everything. I think it could take a little time...
SCRIBE: The prose style isn't much to write home about, but it's very thorough.

Scene 16: INT.
The throne room. The babble of a crowd in the distance.

FROBISHER: The blue temple that everyone's worshipping! It's the TARDIS!
PEPIN: I should have guessed. Its appearance was what convinced them I'm a god.
(There is a roar of recognition from the crowd as they are seen.)
FROBISHER: Pepin. Perhaps we should take refuge somewhere else. The people look ugly.
PEPIN: Oh no, they're always as unattractive as that. The people are jubilant. See, they bring gifts of flowers and fruit.
CROWD: *(severally)* Hail our new god, Pepin VII! May he reign eternally! Hail his ambassador! The big talking bird!
PEPIN: Just walk through them. They'll clear a way for us.
FROBISHER: *(awkwardly, through the hubbub)* That's it... Out of the way there, that's the idea...
CROWD 1: You are magnificent!
FROBISHER: *(humouring him)* Okay, bud, whatever you say... We've made it. Pepin, quick, let's get inside. All this adoration could go to a guy's head, you know?
PEPIN: But how can we both enter my temple? It is too small...
FROBISHER: You'll be surprised.

Scene 17: INT.
The TARDIS console room. The usual hum. And then we hear the TARDIS doors open, and FROBISHER and PEPIN enter.

PEPIN: This is indeed a miracle!
FROBISHER: I knew you'd be surprised... Hey, what's all this junk doing in here?
PEPIN: All this gleaming white! And there's so much of it! It's magnificent!
FROBISHER: Who's been putting flowers and baskets of fruit everywhere? I can hardly find the door switch... Ah.
(The TARDIS doors shut.)
PEPIN: But surely then, you must have come from heaven after

all?
FROBISHER: No, Pepin...
PEPIN: But look at it! At all this! ...You really are angels!
FROBISHER: Listen, bud. It's as the Doc said. We're just travellers. There's no such place as heaven, okay?
(Lots of switches and buttons are pressed. There are a few bleeps. Muttering to himself:)
The TARDIS still isn't working properly. Or not wanting to work. Typical. ...What's the matter?
PEPIN: *(brokenly)* No heaven at all?
FROBISHER: *(awkwardly)* Well, no. Not that I've ever seen.
PEPIN: But there has to be a heaven. Or else what's the point of anything? What's the point of living at all?
FROBISHER: Hey, look... perhaps there is a heaven. Who knows? The universe is big enough. Perhaps the TARDIS just hasn't landed there yet. Don't take my opinion as gospel or anything... Come on, give me a hand moving this stuff.
(And he thumps about on the console.)
PEPIN: You must not touch the fruit and flowers. They are tributes to decorate the altar.
FROBISHER: That isn't an altar. It's a central console. A machine. It allows us to travel anywhere in time and space.
(He stabs a button. It gives a very half-hearted bleep.)
When it isn't on strike, that is...
PEPIN: Tell me again. This central console... it is the source of your temple's power? And it allows you to communicate with other worlds?
FROBISHER: Yes. In a way.
PEPIN: Then we agree after all, my friend. For that is exactly what an altar is.

Scene 18: INT.
The scribe's bedroom. We hear some pages being leafed through.

DOCTOR: Fascinating. So what you've got here is your good old-fashioned polytheistic religion, but with a monotheistic structure. You can worship lots of gods, but only one at a time. Must get rather confusing for you all.
SCRIBE: It did get a bit complicated a couple of centuries ago, when the royal family went down with a lethal dose of chicken pox. Gods were popping up and dropping down quicker than you could say 'heretic'.
DOCTOR: Indeed.
SCRIBE: In the end, though, I think the only one who gets really confused is me. The people are quite happy to worship whichever god they're told to. But I'm the poor chap who has to keep up with all the paperwork. Would you like a drink? I'm sure I've got some somewhere...
(Thumps and clatter.)
DOCTOR: And how many gods have you chronicled? How many of these books are yours?
SCRIBE: Oh, Doctor, I've no idea. To tell you the truth, I've lost

count. Ah, here we are! Now. Do you like your hot water weak or tepid?
(The pouring of water into a mug. And then another. Over this the conversation continues.)

DOCTOR: But you must remember which of these texts you were personally responsible for. This one here, Clothaire the Great. Is he one of yours?

(We hear a heavy volume being picked up.)

SCRIBE: Oh, Clothaire, he's one of my favourites! Oh no, I couldn't have written that one. He lived hundreds and hundreds of years ago. Except...

DOCTOR: ...Except what?

SCRIBE: Well, it is hard to be sure. I've read and reread all these books so many times I feel I might as well have written them. Certainly Clothaire seems as alive to me as young Pepin does now.

DOCTOR: *(closing a book with a snap)* You know, Eugene. There's something odd about this. Something that doesn't add up.

SCRIBE: You mean the handwriting?

DOCTOR: *(eagerly)* Oh, no, I hadn't noticed that! What about the handwriting?

SCRIBE: Well, it doesn't matter how old the book is. The handwriting is always the same.

DOCTOR: Let me see.

(Books being picked up eagerly.)

SCRIBE: *(slurping his drink)* I've always thought that was rather strange. I suppose it's because my father taught me how to write, and his father taught him, and so on.

DOCTOR: No, that doesn't make sense at all.

SCRIBE: *(cheerfully)* I didn't think it did! Tell me, Doctor. Which part of these texts doesn't make sense to you?

DOCTOR: You say that every time a god dies, you start writing in a completely new book?

SCRIBE: Yes, of course. The death invalidates the whole Bible. I have to start all over.

DOCTOR: Quite so. But every single one of these volumes... the god dies on exactly the last line of exactly the last page. No blank sheets at the end, nothing has been ripped out. How do you explain that?

SCRIBE: I don't know. Divine providence?

DOCTOR: Possibly. But I'd have thought that any god worth his salt would have more concerns than economising the stationery. Let me see your new Bible, the one you're writing for Pepin.

(With a grunt, the SCRIBE rises and passes him a book.)

SCRIBE: Here.

DOCTOR: But this is hardly a book at all! It's so thin it's practically a pamphlet.

SCRIBE: It's just the first text that came to hand...

DOCTOR: *(amiably)* Tell me, Eugene. Do you know something about the life expectancy of the emperor that I don't?

(There is a bang at the door.)

Are you expecting anyone?

SCRIBE: No. No-one ever comes here.

CLOVIS: *(outside)* Open up in there!

(The SCRIBE picks his way through the mess, knocking things over as he does so.)
SCRIBE: Yes, yes, of course. There's a lot of clutter for me to clamber over. Just don't break down the door. I've only just replaced it...
(The door opens.)
Good lord. It's the high priest.
DOCTOR: Really? How extraordinary. Do the upper clergy often make house calls?
CLOVIS: The two of you will accompany me at once.
(The sound of clatter as the DOCTOR rises.)
DOCTOR: And where are you taking us, may I ask?
CLOVIS: To see your new master.

Scene 19: INT.
The dungeons.
(Nothing but the dripping of water, and painful breathing. A few seconds of this. Then we hear footsteps on stone - slow, deliberate, and getting closer. The high heels of LIVILLA. The prisoner catches her breath - then calls out hoarsely.)

BERENGARIA: What? Who's there? Is that you, guard? Have you come to feed me already?
LIVILLA: *(softly)* No.
BERENGARIA: I should think not. I haven't even begun to starve yet. When I was empress, we knew how to torture prisoners.
LIVILLA: *(closer, deliberately)* As you say. Late empress Berengaria.
BERENGARIA: So who are you then? Move the candle a little closer.
(Another footstep on stone.)
...Ah. So it is you. Lady Livilla, my successor. Come to kill me already, have you?
LIVILLA: No.
BERENGARIA: I thought not. You'd want an audience, you're the sort. So what is it? Here for a bit of gloating? Why not, I did. I gloated over my mother-in-law a full month before I cut her down to die.
LIVILLA: I want your help.
(BERENGARIA's chains rattle as she reacts with surprise.)
BERENGARIA: My what?
LIVILLA: I want you to do something for me.
BERENGARIA: The only thing I'll do for you is die.
LIVILLA: And nothing else?
BERENGARIA: If you're lucky, I might scream with pain as I go. I may have been goddess, but I never said I was perfect.
LIVILLA: And yet it's such a little thing I ask.
(A short pause. Then the chains rattle again.)
BERENGARIA: I'm curious. What could I give you?
LIVILLA: You had two sons. Pepin, my husband, the legitimate heir to the throne. And Childeric.
BERENGARIA: What of it?
LIVILLA: I want you to say you made a mistake, you mixed them up. I want you to say that Childeric is the true God. And that Pepin is the illegitimate one.

Scene 20: INT.
The TARDIS console room.

FROBISHER: Pepin, I think I know why the TARDIS brought us here.
PEPIN: You do?
FROBISHER: It's always landing us in the middle of trouble. Seems to have a knack for it. The Doctor thinks there might be something philanthropic in the circuits, always taking us to places where we have to right wrongs and defeat evil in the nick of time.
PEPIN: Defeating evil. Just like real gods are supposed to do...
FROBISHER: Me, I just think it's being bloody-minded. But this time it's come here for the attention. It's got garlands of flowers all over its console, it's being worshipped as the holy church of a living god. I bet you're having the time of your life, aren't you? Even the background hum sounds smugger than normal.
(And the hum rises a little in tone, then returns to what it was before.)
PEPIN: We won't be allowed to hide in our humming temple forever, Frobisher.
FROBISHER: What do you mean?
PEPIN: Sooner or later the people will come for me. They'll expect me to make proclamations and judgements and that sort of thing. It's going to be horrid.
FROBISHER: Doesn't sound that bad...
PEPIN: One of my first commandments will be to execute one tenth of the population for heresy.
FROBISHER: What?
PEPIN: Tradition. Fair's fair, they are all guilty. Last week they all worshipped my father. They'll have to be punished somehow.
FROBISHER: Why? You're the god, aren't you? Tell them you forgive them. Tell them you just won't do it!
PEPIN: But the people demand it. They won't let me stand against tradition. There's no point in having a god if he isn't a bit vengeful now and again. Either their god kills them, or they will kill their god. That's what religion's all about.
(A cry of jubilation from outside.)
What's that?
FROBISHER: Let's find out.
(He operates the scanner. The jubilant cry is more distinct. We hear the smashing of rubble.)
FROBISHER: I thought you said your subjects were happy.
PEPIN: They are.
FROBISHER: Then what's all the vandalism for? Just high spirits? They've just torn down a thirty foot statue!
PEPIN: The statue was of my father.
FROBISHER: Oh.
PEPIN: They will desecrate his image wherever it can be found. The portraits will be burned, the mosaics smashed. By now a mob will have been to the mortuary, found his corpse, and ripped it apart.
(Short pause. We hear another cry of jubilation.)
FROBISHER: That's obscene.
PEPIN: *(flatly)* They feel betrayed. He said he would oppress them forever. And he lied. And I have to ask myself whether I will lie

to them as well.
(More wreckage as something bigger is torn down.)

Scene 21: INT.
The dungeons. As before. As BERENGARIA talks, we hear her chains rattle faintly.

BERENGARIA: I really loved him. He was the only man I ever loved. I picked him to father my bastard simply because he was the only one of my husband's guards that didn't smell. But in return he loved me, and gave me a boy, even though he knew that by tradition he would be executed for treason. When he was hanged it took him sixteen hours to die. I know, I counted every one. But he was Childeric's father. Not Pepin's.
LIVILLA: One word from you, and Childeric will be crowned. And I can be his goddess instead. Do this for me, and when I kill you, it will be painless.
BERENGARIA: No.
LIVILLA: Please.
BERENGARIA: No. *(Short pause, then she laughs.)* Get off your knees! How dare you abase yourself to a prisoner, manacled to a dungeon wall! You are pathetic. Are you an empress or aren't you?
LIVILLA: *(spitefully, desperately)* All right then! All right, you evil old bitch! Help me and I'll let you live! How about that? I'll give you your life!
BERENGARIA: You can't do that. My survival is against the constitution.
LIVILLA: And if your life will make Childeric god, don't you think he'll change that? Help me and live!
BERENGARIA: But I don't want to live.
LIVILLA: ...What?
BERENGARIA: For years I've been waiting for my husband to die. I had got so very tired of being all-powerful, of being feared and hated.
LIVILLA: That shan't happen to me.
BERENGARIA: Perhaps not. But I doubt it. It will take a greater imagination than yours to stave off the tedium of undeserved divinity.
LIVILLA: If you do not choose to help me, I can make you do so. You understand me?
BERENGARIA: Oh yes. I was wondering when the threats would come.
(And we hear a punch. It is loud, brutal. And another. And another. A pause, then another.)
LIVILLA: *(out of breath)* Now. What do you say?
(Silence. And then we hear BERENGARIA spit. Hoarse, but with strength:)
BERENGARIA: ...When I came here to torture my mother-in-law. When I came to gloat. With a small blunt knife I would cut her face. Every day I would do it, hack another piece off. By the time I had her executed there was no face left, just her eyes so she could see the moment of her death. And never once did she cry. Did you even bring a knife?
LIVILLA: No.
BERENGARIA: You are not fit to follow in her footsteps or mine. Unless you are prepared to hurt me properly, leave here at once.

LIVILLA: Very well, Berengaria. If that is your wish...
(And we hear her footsteps recede. The slow, deliberate click of her high heels on stone. Four or five paces, then they stop. We hear only the dripping of water and the heavy, guttered breathing of BERENGARIA. Then we hear something heavy and metal being picked up from the ground. And the high heels quickly skipping over the stone floor, and a hideous thump of a hideous thump hitting flesh. Involuntarily BERENGARIA gives a loud gasp of agony. And another weaker sound as the bar hits her again. But when she is hit for the third time, we hear nothing from her. And now we hear the heavy, excited breathing of LIVILLA. She drops the metal bar on the stone floor. And then she runs away.)

Scene 22: INT.
The vaults.
(We hear a door opening.)

DOCTOR: Is this it?
CLOVIS: Both of you. Inside.
DOCTOR: You take us all the way down a whole series of wet, dark corridors just to bring us to a wet, dark room. I had been hoping for something a little more climactic.
(The door is slammed behind.)
CHILDERIC: Ah, Clovis. I see you have brought our guest. Welcome. Let me shake your hand.
SCRIBE: *(nervously)* Thank you.
CHILDERIC: I trust that your invitation here hasn't inconvenienced you.
DOCTOR: No, not at all. Frankly, I'm delighted to be here. Sooner or later the enemy always wants to meet me. Which suits me fine, because sooner or later I want to meet the enemy. You are the enemy, I take it?
CHILDERIC: Clovis, what did you bring this idiot for?
CLOVIS: He was with the scribe. I couldn't very well leave him behind.
DOCTOR: Less of the idiot. I can't be so stupid if you realised I needed capturing, now can I?
CLOVIS: But we didn't want to capture you. We wanted to capture Eugene Tacitus.
CHILDERIC: You're of no interest to us whatsoever.
DOCTOR: Oh. Rather an oversight on your part. You should count yourself lucky you've got me captured anyway. Now, why don't we all sit down and you can tell me what nefarious schemes you're concocting.
CHILDERIC: That is exactly what I plan to do.
DOCTOR: Excellent. Well, let's get the introductions out of the way. I'm the Doctor, Eugene you already know. No doubt you're the half-brother who intends to usurp the throne, and this is the high priest prepared to betray his god to help you.
CLOVIS: Correct.
DOCTOR: And who's that in the corner? Hello? What's your name then?
(He takes footsteps towards him.)

CHILDERIC: Don't speak to him, Doctor. He won't be able to answer you.
DOCTOR: And why's that then? Henchman shyness, I suppose? It's all right, old chap, I won't bite...
(And ARNULF gives a grunt of pain and misery.)
Oh my word...
CHILDERIC: He hasn't got a tongue.
(Short pause. The DOCTOR is suddenly quieter, more serious. He takes a few deliberate paces before he speaks.)
DOCTOR: And did you do that?
CHILDERIC: I did.
DOCTOR: Why?
CHILDERIC: Believe it or not, he volunteered. It's a requirement of his job. Arnulf would have done it himself, but cutting out one's own tongue is trickier than you might imagine. So I was happy to oblige.
DOCTOR: But what is it for? What job could require such mutilation?
CHILDERIC: If you will come with me, I'll show you.

Scene 23: INT.
The TARDIS console room.
(We hear a group of men all chanting 'heave' faintly.)

FROBISHER: Well, that's one statue they're not going to be able to topple. Look at the size of it. It must weigh tons.
(And we hear it crash. Loud shouts of joy, chants.)
Oh. Your subjects are stronger than they look, aren't they?
PEPIN: *(dully)* And that's the last one. It took fifteen years to finish, and twelve men died in its construction. It was a masterpiece.
FROBISHER: And now it's in rubble over the throne room floor. This is insane.
PEPIN: *(softly)* Oh, give them time, they'll build one of me just as magnificent.
(Underneath, we hear the crowd begin to chant 'Pepin'.)
And then one for my successor, and then one for his. The same stones used over and over again.
FROBISHER: Pepin? Are you all right?
PEPIN: By now every trace of my father will have been wiped away. Very soon I shall forget what he looked like.
(Short pause. The scanner is operated. The chanting is silenced. For a few seconds, we hear nothing but the hum of the TARDIS.)
FROBISHER: *(awkwardly)* I'm sorry.
PEPIN: I believed in him. I worshipped him. I followed all of his laws, revered all of his doctrines. I thanked him every time he beat me, and smiled when he said I was unworthy to be his son. Because I was unworthy, you see, Frobisher? Because he was my everything. He was my god.
FROBISHER: *(gently)* You're the god now.
PEPIN: I could believe in him. I can't believe in me. ...I can't hide here any longer. My people will be expecting me.
FROBISHER: And what will you tell them?

PEPIN: The truth.
FROBISHER: And they'll kill you.
PEPIN: Can't be helped though. Better to get it over and done with now before they start building any statues of me.
FROBISHER: Pepin... Look. Whether you're a god or not... you're the boss, aren't you? You're the one in charge. You could try to change things. Liberate your people or something, start a revolution! ...I know that may not be as easy as it sounds...
PEPIN: I can't.
FROBISHER: *(angrily)* If you don't, who else will?
PEPIN: My father might have been able to. But I'm sorry, my friend, I'm just not strong enough. I'm leaving the temple now.
FROBISHER: I just think you might serve your people better alive than dead. I just think you should consider that!
PEPIN: Don't worry. I shan't let them harm you. Open the doors.
(A hesitation. And then the doors open.)

Scene 24: INT.
The vaults.
(As the party move down stone steps:)

CHILDERIC: No-one really believes in God any more. That's what makes Pepin's honesty at the coronation all the more pathetic - no-one expects him to become immortal and rule forever. Oh, they'd kill him fo saying so, of course, the laws against heresy are without mercy. But there is no true faith any more, the people commit heresy secretly ever day in their hearts. The laws by which their ancestors feared for their lives have become empty rituals, without number and without meaning.
DOCTOR: *(gently)* Childeric. It's inevitable. No matter how fundamentalist a religion might be at its root, it gets compromised sooner or later. It happens to every belief in every nation on every planet. The extremists die out, and what's left is something woolly and fuzzy.
CHILDERIC: Come through this doorway, all of you. And down these steps.
CLOVIS: Where are you taking us, Childeric?
CHILDERIC: Are you frightened, Clovis? The lower we go into the catacombs?
CLOVIS: You know I am.
CHILDERIC: You have little faith. What a high priest you turned out to be. But it's not your fault. As the people began to doubt, so even the gods who lived amongst them became corrupted. They began to believe that they were fallible, that they were not the beginning and the end. And as the gods grew more corrupt, so the people who worshipped them were corrupted even further. High priests used to burn with the passion of their faith. Not like Clovis here, who's frightened of the dark
CLOVIS: It's not just the dark I'm frightened of. Are you saying you really expect me to believe in god? But no-one in the church has done that for centuries!
CHILDERIC: But you will soon, Clovis. It's a vicious circle that must be broken.

DOCTOR: It's a fact of life which must be accepted. A consequence of civilisation. Eugene, are you all right?
SCRIBE: Doctor, I'm frightened. No-one ever goes down into the castle vaults. There's nothing in any of my texts about this.
DOCTOR: To tell you the truth, I'm frightened too.
CHILDERIC: You can all rest now. This is the deepest recorded level of the castle.
(And the footsteps come to a stop.)
SCRIBE: *(nervously, boldly)* Why have you brought us here?
CHILDERIC: I decided long ago that I would become god. But I would not be the weak and tepid god that this religion has made. When I rule, I will be all-powerful, and I really will reign forever. Doctor. Press this stone.
DOCTOR: Very well.
(Scratching on stone as the DOCTOR stoops. And then we hear the stonework move. Behind we hear distant wind. The rest of the scene is spoken over it.)
A secret passageway?
CHILDERIC: Hidden for centuries. And down there, in the pitch black, the steps continue. Deeper and deeper into the bowels of the castle.
DOCTOR: And what is down there?
CHILDERIC: Hidden alone since birth. Untainted and pure. My son. And your new messiah.
(And the wind grows louder, then fades into:)

Scene 25: INT.
The throne room.

CROWD: All hail Pepin! All hail our god!
(And on. Over this:)
PEPIN: *(softly)* Frobisher. I'm frightened.
FROBISHER: I'm not surprised. They'll lynch you.
PEPIN: It's not that. I just hate public speaking. *(And louder, over the tumult:)* My people! Listen to me! *(And the crowd falls quiet.)* I thank you from the bottom of my heart. No emperor has been so honoured by his people.
A VOICE: Let's build him a statue!
(A roar of approval.)
PEPIN: No, please! No statues, I beg you! I only wish I deserved one. But I tell you I am no god. I am as mortal as the rest of you.
(A deathly silence, finally broken by one plaintive voice:)
A VOICE: But we need a god! How shall we survive without a god?
PEPIN: My friends, you have a god. Someone of great wisdom and courage. Someone who will watch over us and our children for the rest of time.
(Short pause)
A VOICE: Well, where is he then?
PEPIN: My people, this is Frobisher. He who came from another world to bring salvation to us all.
FROBISHER: What?
CROWD: All hail Frobisher! All hail the big talking bird! All hail Frobisher! All hail the big talking bird!

(And FROBISHER's words to himself are almost lost as the cries grow louder and louder.)
FROBISHER: *(softly)* Oh... my god.

End of Part Two

PART THREE

Scene 25, partial recap:

CROWD: All hail Frobisher! All hail the big talking bird! All hail Frobisher! All hail the big talking bird!
(And, over this, hissing:)
FROBISHER: Where I come from, this is known as passing the buck.
PEPIN: But you are a god! I know that you're the only one with the vision to bring salvation to my people.
FROBISHER: Thanks to you, I think I will have my work cut out just trying to stay alive.

Scene 26: INT.
The vaults. As before. We hear the wind in the background.

CLOVIS: *(nervously)* Sire. I did not know that you had a son.
DOCTOR: Do you really mean to say that you are keeping a small child imprisoned down there?
CHILDERIC: Oh, 'imprisoned' is such a perjorative word, Doctor. It is true he can't leave his little cell. But he shall be grateful to me. I am the means of his immortality. My actions are turning him into a god.
DOCTOR: And how long have you been this generous to him?
CHILDERIC: From the moment of his birth, Doctor. Or else there would have been no point. He's been there these five years now.
CLOVIS: Childeric. Why didn't you tell me?
CHILDERIC: No-one has known. Except me, and Arnulf here, who feeds him daily.
(ARNULF gives a grunt.)
DOCTOR: And that's why you cut out his tongue? To protect your disgusting secret?
CHILDERIC: No, not at all. To protect the messiah. If he heard even a single word from a mortal, his transformation would be threatened. On no account must he be corrupted by the language of man, its cynicism, its complacency. In his innocence he will have devised a language of his own, a language without doubt and the taint of what man has become, a language which is perfect and pure. A language from heaven itself. And to safeguard that, even the servant who slides the food under the door of his cell must be physically incapable of speech.
(Affectionately:) You're a good man, Arnulf.
(ARNULF gives a pleased grunt.)
CLOVIS: We thought you couldn't have a child. Your wife disappeared all those years ago, and you have refused to marry since.
CHILDERIC: But my wife never disappeared. I know precisely where she is.
CLOVIS: You murdered her?
DOCTOR: Oh, not at all, Clovis. I'm sure her usefulness simply came to an end. Isn't that right, Childeric?
CHILDERIC: As she was giving birth to my son, I cut out her tongue so that even as she cursed during the agony of childbirth she could not taint him. She was allowed to feed the baby down there for a few

months. And then, when she ran dry, I had her walled up.
DOCTOR: All to create the perfect being.
CHILDERIC: As you say, Doctor. I am a godmaker.
DOCTOR: So why don't you just let him out then? This god you have made?
CHILDERIC: He is still a child. I do not intend him to be released for another twelve years yet. Then, when he is an adult, he shall have the maturity to rule by my side, and teach me how to be perfect like him.
DOCTOR: And it's all gone wrong, hasn't it? Your father died earlier than you expected.
CHILDERIC: My son has become a god before I am ready for him to be one. Which is why I need you, scribe.
SCRIBE: *(slightly in the distance, faintly)* Oh. I had rather hoped you'd all forgotten about me...
CHILDERIC: I must know what has happened to him. For years you and your fathers have chronicled the lives of generations of false gods. Now you are to be privileged. You shall write an account of a real one.
(Footsteps on stone. We hear the wind blow a little louder.)
SCRIBE: ...You're going to lock me down there?
CHILDERIC: Until he is of age, you will sit with him and observe him in every detail. What you write shall form the basis of our new Bible. Your tongue will be cut out, of course.
DOCTOR: Of course it will. And shall my tongue be cut out too?
CHILDERIC: There is no need, Doctor, since you will never see the messiah.
DOCTOR: Jolly good. So you'll be letting me off scott free, I assume?
CHILDERIC: I think I'll cut out your heart instead.
(He laughs. And ARNULF joins him in his own hideous parody.)
DOCTOR: *(suddenly sober)* You are aware that you're utterly mad, aren't you?
(The laughter stops from both of them.)
CHILDERIC: Oh yes. At the moment I am only mad. But soon I shall be divine.

Scene 27: INT.
The throne room.

(The chanting continues.)
PEPIN: Now you must speak to the people and make assurances of your divinity.
FROBISHER: No way, bud. I'm going back to the TARDIS.
(The TARDIS door shuts. FROBISHER bangs on it in frustration.)
Hey! Let me in! Open this door at once!
(The chanting subsides. We hear the chainmail heavy marching of SEJANUS.)
...Who's that man coming towards me?
PEPIN: That is Guard Captain Sejanus.
(A sword is drawn.)
FROBISHER: And why is he drawing his sword?
(As the footsteps stop:)
...Look, this has all been a big mistake...

CAPTAIN: *(smoothly)* I lay down my sword before my new lord.
(A clank of sword against stone.)
FROBISHER: What? Oh. Yes. Good.
CAPTAIN: Hail the big talking bird.
(And the crowd take up his words, and chant them once, with fervour.)
CROWD: Hail the big talking bird!
FROBISHER: I wish you wouldn't call me that... Oy! And you can stop kissing my flipper too.
CAPTAIN: I am yours to command, your omnipotence. What are your orders?
FROBISHER: ...Well, I don't have any at the moment. Why don't you just do what you normally do?
CAPTAIN: *(picking up his sword)* And smite your enemies wherever they are found?
FROBISHER: Yes. If you like.
CAPTAIN: Very good, sire. Right, come along, you.
(Chainmail footsteps begin to sound.)
FROBISHER: Where are you taking Pepin?
PEPIN: They're going to execute me, Frobisher.
CAPTAIN: He is a false god and a heretic. He must be destroyed.
FROBISHER: No, stop. Wait.
(The footsteps come to a halt. Expectant pause.)
...I forbid it.
PEPIN: You can't forbid it, my friend. It's the constitution. I must be put to death.
CAPTAIN: The lying blasphemer speaks the truth, your majesty.
FROBISHER: Well, I pardon him. How about that? What if I pardon him?
CAPTAIN: It's never been done before.
FROBISHER: Well, I'm doing it now.
(We hear him step forward, clear his throat.)
Pepin, I hereby pardon you, yadda yadda yadda. There. Done.
PEPIN: Erm, are you sure about this? I have no purpose any longer. Honestly, perhaps it would be better if I just went off with the guard captain here and let him hack me to pieces. Might be better all round...
CAPTAIN: I'd have thought so...
FROBISHER: You want a purpose? Fine. I'll make you... I'll make you my high priest. There. I hereby appoint you...
CAPTAIN: But he's a heretic!
FROBISHER: Nonsense. I don't think anyone more fully believes I am a god than Pepin here. So he's the ideal man for the job.
CAPTAIN: But you can't do that! It makes a mockery of our history and tradition...!
FROBISHER: Silence! Am I your god or not? You shall obey me in everything.
(A dangerous pause. Then a clank as the sword is lain back on the stone.)
SEJANUS: My lord.
PEPIN: ...So you really are our god, after all?
FROBISHER: It seems I have to be.
PEPIN: Then speak to the people. They await your blessing.

(Pause. We hear him take a few steps forward. Then the cheering begins again. FROBISHER clears his throat.)
FROBISHER: My people!
(The cheers fade. They let him speak. Quieter:)
...My subjects. Listen to me. Are you sure you want me as your new god?
(Raucous cheers.)
Okay. Okay then, I accept. But listen up.
(The cheers die down again. Deliberately:)
There are going to be a few changes.

Scene 28: INT.
A cell. Faint background dripping on stone. The odd sound of chains clanking throughout the scene.

SCRIBE: I don't expect they'll keep us waiting.
DOCTOR: No, I imagine not.
(We hear some chains being pulled.)
Your manacles not too tight, I hope?
SCRIBE: Oh no. No, I'm almost comfortable.
(And he pulls his chains too.)
For what it's worth, I don't imagine I shall outlive you very long.
DOCTOR: No offence, Eugene, but that isn't very much comfort.
SCRIBE: I'm an old man. I can't see myself surviving twelve years locked in a small cell with a superbeing. If I'm lucky, I might last a few months. But to be honest, it's a predicament likely to scare me quite literally to death. It's such a pity to die. As a historian, I want to know how everything turns out.
DOCTOR: What will happen to your Bible now?
SCRIBE: Well, the post is hereditary. So I expect my son will carry on the good work.
DOCTOR: You have a son?
SCRIBE: Oh, I expect I must have. Otherwise he couldn't very well succeed me, could he? Stands to reason.
(Short pause)
DOCTOR: *(softly)* Tell me about your son.
SCRIBE: Why? What about him?
DOCTOR: Oh, I don't know. What does he look like, for example?
SCRIBE: I don't know. He looks a bit like me. I'd have thought.
DOCTOR: Does he?
SCRIBE: Oh yes. The mirror image. I expect. But younger. I don't know. Doctor, does it really matter?
DOCTOR: Yes, I think it does.
SCRIBE: Well, I don't want to discuss it.
DOCTOR: *(insistently)* Do you remember him at all? Eugene? Can you remember your own son?
SCRIBE: *(with surprising anger)* He's not very important! That's all! That's all there is to it!
DOCTOR: Eugene...
SCRIBE: All that is important is recorded in the old texts! He'll be just another scribe, a scribbler, a penpusher like me. No scribes have

ever appeared in the pages they've written! We just don't matter enough! Do you understand?
DOCTOR: I think I'm beginning to.
(A heavy sound of chains, as SCRIBE turns away. Softly, to himself:)
SCRIBE: All of us. We're worthless.

Scene 29: INT.
The vaults.
(LIVILLA's heels click smartly on stone as she paces angrily. A creak as a door opens.)

LIVILLA: Childeric! How dare you keep me waiting like this?
CHILDERIC: I have been busy. But I'm sure when Arnulf here caught you, he would have put you in a comfortable cell. And, see, it is comfortable, isn't it? Well done, Arnulf.
(A pleased grunt from ARNULF.)
LIVILLA: He didn't capture me. I came to see you of my own free will. And I find it disgraceful the way you treat me, a potential ally locked up as a prisoner...
CHILDERIC: A potential ally?
LIVILLA: You see? I knew that would get your interest.
CHILDERIC: To be strictly honest, I'm more amused than interested. Why are you here, Livilla? What do you want of me?
LIVILLA: Isn't it obvious? I want you to give me a taste of your power.
CHILDERIC: *(chuckling)* Believe me, it is by no means certain I shall even give you your life. You do realise I could kill you in a moment? Show the empress your knife, Arnulf.
(ARNULF grunts. We hear a knife being drawn.)
LIVILLA: *(bravely)* You wouldn't kill me. Not before you hear what I have to offer.
CHILDERIC: I wouldn't count on it. Frankly, I'm too busy at the moment with my own plots and schemes to want to waste time listening to yours.
LIVILLA: You're going to take the throne, aren't you? You're going to kill my husband and take the throne.
CHILDERIC: Of course.
LIVILLA: When you do, I want to be your consort. I want to sit by your side and rule forever.
CHILDERIC: I take it then that you're not here to plead for your husband's life?
LIVILLA: Of course not. You are my only god.
CHILDERIC: I would have more respect for you if you were.
LIVILLA: I can offer you my beauty.
CHILDERIC: And you would give that beautiful to a man as ugly as I am?
(And he laughs. ARNULF joins in. LIVILLA, nervously, gives an awkward laugh of her own.)
LIVILLA: But you're not ugly, my love... No, not at all...
(The laughter stops dead. And we hear a heavy slap. LIVILLA gives a gasp of pain.)
CHILDERIC: *(quietly, intensely)* Look at me. Look right into my face.

Is this the face of god?
LIVILLA: *(frightened, barely audible)* ...Yes.
(And we hear CHILDERIC step away from her. He begins to pace deliberately on the stone.)
CHILDERIC: You are indeed beautiful, my dear. Unfortunately I have little taste for it. Living in the shadows as a renegade all these years has seen to that.
LIVILLA: *(nervously)* You could make me ugly if you wished it. Batter me, bruise me, whatever suits your pleasure. If you will make me a goddess.
CHILDERIC: What do you think, Arnulf? Shall we mark her now?
(ARNULF gives a short burst of his laugh.)
I'll consider it. What else can you offer?
LIVILLA: I'll give you a child. An heir.
CHILDERIC: Indeed. You must know that my son is my prime concern.
LIVILLA: But if you want to be god, you must act now.
CHILDERIC: I have been patient many years, Livilla. I can be patient a while longer.
LIVILLA: My husband has abdicated. And another god rules in his place.
(The pacing stops. Short pause)
CHILDERIC: What?

Scene 30: INT.
A cell. Chains rattling, as before.

DOCTOR: When you've been locked up for execution or torture as often as I have, you'll find the worst thing is all the hanging around waiting for them to get on with it.
SCRIBE: Speaking as a novice, I've got to say they can take as long as they like.
(We hear a door creak open.)
DOCTOR: I'm sorry, Eugene. It seems that they're ready for us.
(Slow footsteps towards them. The menace is undermined when CLOVIS clears his throat awkwardly.)
CLOVIS: Right. I have the knife here. Now. Who would like to go first?
DOCTOR: Is that a clumsy attempt at sadism? Because I'm telling you, I've heard better.
CLOVIS: Not at all, Doctor. I have no wish to cause either of you any more discomfort than is necessary. I am as unhappy with this situation as you are.
DOCTOR: Mmm. Probably not quite as unhappy.
SCRIBE: I don't mind going first. Give the Doctor a few more minutes of life.
CLOVIS: Very well.
(We hear chains being steadied.)
DOCTOR: That's very good of you, Eugene.
SCRIBE: Well, if there's one thing that being a historian has taught me, it's that death and torture are bound to happen sooner or later to all of us. Best just to grin and bear it.

CLOVIS: If you could open your mouth for me, please. As wide as possible, that's it.
(A little grunt from the SCRIBE.)
Oh yes, I see it. Now, this may prick a little...
DOCTOR: If you're so unhappy with this situation...
CLOVIS: I am. I'm a holy man, not a butcher. For generations my family have been high priests, always betraying their god in some doomed rebellion or other. It's tradition. But none of them ever killed anybody. The only blood they spilt was their own when they were captured and executed.
DOCTOR: And that makes sense to you?
CLOVIS: This is not the sort of rebellion I was expecting. What usually happens is a glorious attack on the emperor, followed by humiliating defeat by his guards. None of this talk about new messiahs. Basic treachery isn't as simple as it was in my father's day.
DOCTOR: Clovis. You know that your leader is quite insane.
CLOVIS: Yes.
DOCTOR: Take the knife out of Eugene's mouth.
(A little grunt from the SCRIBE, as if in agreement.)
CLOVIS: I can't, Doctor. I'm sorry. I don't understand what's going on, but I know my role. I'm the high priest who rebels against the rightful god. It's hereditary. ...Now, hold still.
(A gasp from the SCRIBE.)
And I'll have that tongue out in a jiffy.
(And we hear the door burst open, quick footsteps into the room.)
CHILDERIC: You can stop now, Clovis. Our plans have changed.
(And we hear a rattling gasp of relief.)
CLOVIS: Yes, lord.
DOCTOR: Are you all right, Eugene?
SCRIBE: Ahh... A bit of lockjaw, that's all.
CHILDERIC: You may be more useful alive after all, Doctor. It seems you have friends in high places.
DOCTOR: I have?
CHILDERIC: The big talking bird has usurped the throne and made himself god.
DOCTOR: How very enterprising of him. Frobisher, what have you been up to?
CLOVIS: And the scribe's tongue?
CHILDERIC: Can stay in his head. We can't afford to be cautious any longer. Ready or not, we shall have to release my son from the vaults immediately.

Scene 31: INT.
The throne room. We hear gentle snoring.

PEPIN: *(softly)* Am I disturbing you, your majesty? May I approach the throne?
FROBISHER: ...What? Sorry, I was just taking a nap. Being a god is certainly draining, isn't it?
PEPIN: How right you are, my lord. But what you say is always right.
(FROBISHER yawns and stretches.)

FROBISHER: Please don't fawn, Pepin. I'm Frobisher. Same guy I always was.
PEPIN: If you say so, your supreme and unquestionable omnipotence.
FROBISHER: *(sighing)* Well. I think I've made good progress anyway.
PEPIN: Excellent progress.
FROBISHER: Excellent progress, yes. I've introduced the people to parliamentary democracy, religious toleration and the concept of equal rights.
PEPIN: All in half an hour.
FROBISHER: And how are the elections for prime minister going?
PEPIN: Well, that's why I'm here, sire. Your subjects are ready to cast their votes, as you instructed them.
FROBISHER: Good.
(We hear a sheet of paper being studied.)
PEPIN: And they've asked me to ask you. Which candidate would you like them to choose?
(Short pause)
FROBISHER: For my next speech, Pepin, remind me to bring up the subject of free will.
PEPIN: Whatever you command shall be done. Your wish is all that matters.
FROBISHER: What of the Doctor?
PEPIN: There's no trace of him, your majesty. Or of the scribe we need to chronicle your great edicts.
FROBISHER: You'll continue to look for him, won't you? Maybe he got outside the castle...
PEPIN: *(puzzled)* Outside the castle?
FROBISHER: Yes. You know. Lowered the drawbridge or something.
PEPIN: I'm sorry, sire, I don't understand...
(And we hear battering at the door.)
FROBISHER: (alarmed) What is it?
PEPIN: The door's giving way...
(And as he says this, it breaks apart. Quick chainmail footsteps into the room.)
FROBISHER: What is this? Who dares disturb my great thoughts? Get out!
PEPIN: Sejanus!
SEJANUS: If you truly are an immortal god, you shan't feel the bullets when I shoot you.
(The gun is cocked.)
FROBISHER: *(irritably)* Oh, not another assassination. Get out.
SEJANUS: *(taken aback)* What?
FROBISHER: You heard me. Go on, get out.
SEJANUS: But, your majesty. It's my job. This is what I do...
PEPIN: Be fair, your majesty. It's what he does.
FROBISHER: What's the point? Your gun's loaded with blanks anyway...
(The gun is fired. A bullet ricochets around the room.)
PEPIN: Since the Doctor complained about the injustice of the ritual, the order was given for live ammunition to be used.
FROBISHER: Thanks a lot, Doc...

SEJANUS: To death! Or to life eternal!
(A gunshot.)

Scene 32: INT.
The vaults. We are in a larger room, so there is more echo.

CHILDERIC: Arnulf has been told to bring the child to us here directly. We shall wait for them.
LIVILLA: What is this talk of children? I thought we were going to usurp the throne!
CHILDERIC: Believe me, Livilla. The hour is at hand.
DOCTOR: Pardon me for pointing out the blindingly obvious, but isn't this terribly dangerous? If your experiment has been successful, and you have created a god, how can you dare release it as a five year old child who has been locked in a cell all his life?
CHILDERIC: It is a risk we have to take. I could have handled Pepin on my own. But this talking bird is an unknown quantity. I do not know the extent of his powers.
DOCTOR: Listen, Childeric. Frobisher may be a very unusual chap, but I assure you. He is no god.
CHILDERIC: Good. Then our struggle against him will be all the easier.
(We hear a stone doorway open. And heavy footsteps.)
CLOVIS: Arnulf is coming.
CHILDERIC: Bringing his new master, sleeping in his arms. Remember this, scribe. It will be a most poetic start to your new Bible.
(The footsteps stop.)
SCRIBE: *(cold horror)* Doctor! Look at the child's face...!
DOCTOR: What is it, Eugene? It's just a perfectly ordinary face. A little pale, I admit, but that's no surprise considering...
SCRIBE: No! It's the face... I've seen it before! Come back to haunt me...
CHILDERIC: Let me hold the boy.
(We hear him take the baby from ARNULF.)
SCRIBE: *(louder)* You mustn't wake him up! If you do, it'll be the death of you all!
CLOVIS: His eyes are opening...
SCRIBE: No!
CHILDERIC: I command you. Awake. And begin your reign here and now.
(And we hear the gentle innocent yawn of a baby. Short pause - then he begins to talk. When the BOY speaks, the voice has a sinister maturity. It is a higher pitched treatment of a particular member of the cast.)
BOY: Father. You have released me at last.
CHILDERIC: *(startled)* It's impossible... You know our language!
BOY: Of course I know your language. I know everything. Am I not your god?

Scene 33: INT.
The throne room.

PEPIN: I knew that you were a god.
FROBISHER: *(breathless)* But it isn't possible...
PEPIN: What are the limits of possibility to a god like you?
FROBISHER: The bullet passed straight through me. Look! Look at the hole it left in the throne behind me!
PEPIN: It's a miracle, lord. No doubt we shall see many such miracles in the aeons to come.
SEJANUS: Excuse me. But when do I get my imperial coin?
FROBISHER: Pay him outside, Pepin. And leave me. I need to think about this.
PEPIN: If I had any doubts before, my friend, they have been dispelled. You are a shining beacon of hope, and have come to save us all!
(As we hear the chainmail footsteps get fainter:)
FROBISHER: Oh, Doc. Where are you?

Scene 34: INT.
The vaults. Echo, as before.

BOY: Who are these people? Are they my subjects?
CHILDERIC: They are your slaves, your playthings.
LIVILLA: Well, I'm certainly not!
(We hear her high heels as she walks forward.)
Childeric, what is this? I thought I was going to give you a son!
CHILDERIC: As you can see, Livilla, I already have one. I need no other.
LIVILLA: But I am going to be a goddess, aren't I? I am going to be all-powerful? I've waited all my life to be all-powerful, and now I'm nearly there, I refuse to play second fiddle to a precocious brat!
BOY: May I have her, father? Can she be my plaything?
CHILDERIC: Of course, son. Let's see what a god can do.
BOY: Look at me, plaything. Look into my eyes.
LIVILLA: No... What are you doing?
(She falters on the stone floor, the high heels scraping.)
BOY: My doll. My toy.
LIVILLA: Please... Get out of my mind!
BOY: There's not much room in here. You see power as baubles and trinkets and pretty jewellery. You see power as spite and greed. You are wrong.
(And underneath this, we hear the sound of air being compressed...)
LIVILLA: What's happening to me...?
CLOVIS: My God... She's changing...
CHILDERIC: *(interested rather than concerned)* She's getting younger!
BOY: There is nothing petty about my power. My power is blind terror and death. I pity you. Show us what you really are.
LIVILLA: No!
(And her screams subside into the wails of a baby.)
BOY: She is an infant, nothing more. She is unworthy to be my slave.
SCRIBE: *(hissing)* Doctor, do you see? Do you see now what

we're up against? That face, always the same face...
DOCTOR: *(softly)* Quiet, Eugene. Don't make a sound.
(The baby's cries are suddenly broken off, as its neck is snapped.)
BOY: That plaything was no good, father. It's broken. I want another.
CHILDERIC: Not now, my son. There will be time for that later.
BOY: But I'm still hungry! I want to kill another!
CHILDERIC: I really think you've had enough, don't you? Now be a good boy.
(Short pause. Then the BOY begins to cry. Harsh, angry sobs.)
Stop that at once. Is that any way for a god to behave?
BOY: *(viciously)* I want to kill! I want to kill! I want to kill!
(And under his lines we hear the rush of a great wind.)
CLOVIS: What's happening?
DOCTOR: The mental force of that child is incalculable. He's just throwing a little tantrum.
SCRIBE: What are we going to do?
DOCTOR: I suggest we run.
(And we hear them do so, underneath the wind.)
CHILDERIC: Where are you going? All of you, come back!
CLOVIS: Childeric, come on! We have got to get out of here!
CHILDERIC: *(fighting to be heard above the wind and the shouts of the BOY)* No! I shall stay with my son!

Scene 35: INT.
A tunnel off the vaults. We hear the wind behind us in the distance. (The DOCTOR races after the SCRIBE, panting. We hear them both running on the stone floor.)

DOCTOR: Stop, Eugene! I need to talk to you!
SCRIBE: *(ahead of him, frantically)* No, Doctor! I have to get away from here!
DOCTOR: But you know what this thing is. You must tell me.
SCRIBE: *(closer, now the DOCTOR has reached him)* I know so many things, all written in the old texts...
DOCTOR: *(angrily)* No! Not in the old texts! You've seen this before.
(They stop running. Gently:)
Haven't you?
SCRIBE: *(weakly)* ...It's the face. Always the same face. Always on a different child.
DOCTOR: What is it, Eugene? What's it doing here?
SCRIBE: It's come for me. It wants to revenge itself on me.
DOCTOR: And only you?
SCRIBE: How can it keep coming back, Doctor? The face. I killed it. I keep killing it. Why won't it go away?
(Short pause. Then we hear the DOCTOR walking away in the direction he's just been running from. Our point of view stays with the SCRIBE.)
Where are you going?
DOCTOR: I think I know what the child is. I must try to make it see sense.
SCRIBE: Do you really think you can succeed?

DOCTOR: *(stopping for a moment, a distance from him)* If it's what I think it is, I haven't got a chance. So. We'll just have to hope I'm wrong.
(And he resumes walking.)

Scene 36: INT.
The vaults.

(The wind and screams continue.)
CHILDERIC: *I said enough!*
(There is a loud slap. And the storm and cries stop abruptly.)
BOY: *(surprised)* You slapped me.
CHILDERIC: Yes.
BOY: For that I should make your hand drop off.
CHILDERIC: Do you promise to be a good boy? Well. Do you?
BOY: *(sulkily)* Maybe.

Scene 37: INT.
Somewhere within the upper castle.

FROBISHER: What is it you want to show me, Pepin?
PEPIN: There, sire. Right ahead of you. ...No, look up.
FROBISHER: Crikey.
PEPIN: Your first statue.
FROBISHER: What, already? That's incredible.
PEPIN: And this is the sculptor.
FROBISHER: Very well done. Especially impressed with the eyebrows.
SCULPTOR: Please don't put me to death, sire. I have a wife and family.
FROBISHER: Why should I put you to death? I'm just impressed you could knock one out so soon...
PEPIN: Look at the nose, your majesty.
SCULPTOR: *(terrified)* I couldn't get the nose right.
FROBISHER: It's called a beak, actually, guys. Oh, it isn't that bad...
PEPIN: There's practically nothing of it. It's much smaller and far less grand than your divine nose, sire.
SCULPTOR: Your nose is so vast, my lord, I wasn't prepared. And there wasn't enough stone to go round...
FROBISHER: He would be executed for this?
PEPIN: It is a sort of treason, your excellency. A slur on the imperial visage.
FROBISHER: Well, I'll see to that.
(Shapeshifting sound effect.)
PEPIN: My lord! You've... changed!
FROBISHER: Mesomorphed is the word. My beak should now match the statue exactly. And the sculptor can be congratulated on a most accurate piece of work.
SCULPTOR: Thank you, sire, thank you...
FROBISHER: *(coldly)* Listen, Pepin. No-one is to die because of me. No-one. Is anyone else awaiting execution?
PEPIN: Just one woman, sire.
FROBISHER: Then we shall release her at once.

Scene 38: INT.
The vaults.

CHILDERIC: You cannot rule openly. I shall be your regent until you come of age.
BOY: Why?
CHILDERIC: Because you're only a child. No-one would accept you.
BOY: We shall reign together, father and son.
CHILDERIC: Exactly.
BOY: But my way. I shall enter your mind.
CHILDERIC: *(warily)* As you did with Livilla?
BOY: Oh, don't be frightened. I could never hurt my father. I shall become you. And we shall be each other, joined in one body.
CHILDERIC: You can do that?
BOY: Oh, father. You cannot conceive just how much I can do. ...I want to kill. I'm hungry. I want to kill.
CHILDERIC: There's no-one here to kill, you'll have to be patient. But when we are on the throne, then you can execute all the heretics you like!
BOY: What about him?
CHILDERIC: Arnulf's not a heretic. He's our good and loyal servant. We shall need servants like him.
BOY: We shall need no-one. No-one at all. ...He has no tongue.
CHILDERIC: I plucked it out to ensure your divinity.
BOY: Come here, Arnulf. Come closer.
(We hear heavy dragging footsteps.)
That's it. I shall give you back your speech.
(ARNULF grunts - and out of the grunting comes a voice.)
ARNULF: The pain... It's stopped! I can talk again! I can talk!
BOY: But of course. I had to give you your tongue back, so I could find out what your dying words would be.
ARNULF: Please, my lord... No! I have looked after you! Let me live, do not hurt me! No!
(He gags, and dies. His body slumps to the ground.)
BOY: I'd been hoping for something more profound than that. How very disappointing.
(We hear deliberate footsteps.)
DOCTOR: *(boldly)* When is all this killing going to end?
CHILDERIC: Doctor! Why have you come back here? I thought you had run away with the other unbelievers.
DOCTOR: Oh, I believe in your son only too well. Tell me. What will you do with your great powers?
CHILDERIC: I shall be emperor and everyone will do exactly what I say.
DOCTOR: Not you. Him. Well? What will you do?
BOY: Kill.
DOCTOR: And what else?
BOY: Destroy.
DOCTOR: What else?
CHILDERIC: We cannot just kill and destroy, son. Or who will be there to worship us?
DOCTOR: *(insistently)* And what else?

BOY: There is nothing else. After I have destroyed everyone in the castle, I will destroy the castle. And I shall be alone with my father.
DOCTOR: And what about outside the castle? Will you kill all the people out there too?
CHILDERIC: What do you mean, outside?
DOCTOR: Out through the front doors, Childeric. Into the rest of the world.
CHILDERIC: There are no front doors, Doctor. The castle is our world.
BOY: The castle is the world.
DOCTOR: As I thought. You call this an empire? You call yourself a god? A god of one single building, you might as well call yourself a landlord! So I ask you again. What is the point of such great power now?

Scene 39: INT.
The dungeon. We hear the dripping, as before. From a distance we hear feet coming down the steps. The voices get louder as they approach.

FROBISHER: Are all the dungeons as dark as this? I can't see my flipper in front of my eyes...
PEPIN: It's just as well we can't see. There's probably all sorts of bones and blood stains down here...
FROBISHER: Wait! There's a body over there. Shine the candle a little closer.
(And scuffling on stone as they bend down.)
...Who is it?
PEPIN: It's Berengaria. It's my mother.
FROBISHER: She's lost a lot of blood. I think we're too late.
PEPIN: You're a god. You can heal her.
FROBISHER: Pepin, look at her!
PEPIN: Just touch her, and redeem her. And all shall be well.
FROBISHER: What?
PEPIN: Please. I believe in you.
FROBISHER: Very well. For all the good it can do...
(He touches her. We hear a tingle. And then, over it, a desperate gasp of air.)
FROBISHER: She's breathing!
BERENGARIA: What's happening? Am I still alive?
PEPIN: You've saved her!
FROBISHER: *(softly)* I am a god.

Scene 40: INT.
The vaults.

CHILDERIC: You are trying to confuse us, Doctor. What you say makes no sense.
DOCTOR: I know what this place is. And why the TARDIS brought me here.
CHILDERIC: I should have killed you when I had the chance.
DOCTOR: Oh, Childeric. You wouldn't have been able to. What you

are can't harm me or Frobisher.
CHILDERIC: But could my son?
DOCTOR: *(quietly)* Yes.
BOY: Come, father. Be at one with me. Let me enter your mind and soul. And we shall have absolute power.
CHILDERIC: Yes. I am ready.
(And their bodies merge. A humming sound.)
Yes! I can feel it! I am becoming a god at last!
BOY: What? What is this? You are not my father!
(And the humming becomes harsher.)
CHILDERIC: Of course I'm your father! I've had you incarcerated since birth! Who else but a father would do that?
BOY: You are not my father! You have betrayed me!
CHILDERIC: No! Stop! You're tearing me apart...
(With accompanying grisly sound effects...)
BOY: You shall die!
(CHILDERIC screams, and is silent. Wet slap as his body falls on the ground. Gently, as a small innocent child:)
I want my father. Doctor. Are you my father?
DOCTOR: *(softly)* No.
BOY: Please. I must know. Who is my father? Tell me who my father is.
DOCTOR: Lower your voice. Speak like the adults do.
(And the treated voice is lowered. Not enough though.)
BOY: Like this?
DOCTOR: Even deeper than that. And we shall hear who your father is.
BOY/SCRIBE: Well, Doctor? Who is it? Do you recognise this voice?
DOCTOR: *(hushed)* So it was you all the time...
BOY/SCRIBE: I see that you know! So tell me! Who is my father? Who is the man who created god?

End of Part Three

PART FOUR

Scene 40, recap:

BOY: Who is my father? Tell me who my father is.
DOCTOR: Lower your voice. Speak like the adults do.
(And the treated voice is lowered. Not enough though.)
BOY: Like this?
DOCTOR: Even deeper than that. And we shall hear who your father is.
BOY/SCRIBE: Well, Doctor? Who is it? Do you recognise this voice?
DOCTOR: *(hushed)* So it was you all the time...
BOY/SCRIBE: I see that you know! So tell me! Who is my father? Who is the man who created god?
(A dangerous pause.)
Well?
DOCTOR: *(carefully)* I know what you are. And you are not a god.
BOY/SCRIBE: I have complete power over this world. I can destroy every being in it.
DOCTOR: In this castle, yes. But you are not a god.
BOY/SCRIBE: Then what am I. Doctor? Tell me what I am.
DOCTOR: You are a torture device. Designed to torture one specific person.
BOY/SCRIBE: *(angrily)* Who is my father? Tell me who he is!

Scene 41: INT.
The dungeons. Background dripping of water.

BERENGARIA: The pain has stopped. Why don't I feel any more pain?
PEPIN: Another miracle you have performed, o lord.
BERENGARIA: I'd think I was in heaven, except I've already been a god. And know that heaven can't exist.
FROBISHER: How are you feeling? It's hard to tell in this darkness...
BERENGARIA: My wounds have healed over. My breathing is normal, my pulse steady... What is the meaning of this? What's going on?
PEPIN: I'm sorry, mother, really, I thought that you...
BERENGARIA: Oh, is that my pathetic son Pepin? I should have guessed you'd be behind this. And who's the figure next to you? Shine the candle closer to his face. I see, a big talking bird. Help me to my feet. *(A rattle of chains as they do so.)* And now, would you both like to explain to me what you think you're playing at?
FROBISHER: Listen, lady, I don't know how I did it, but I just saved your life...!
BERENGARIA: And who asked you to? If you hadn't interfered, I'd have been happily dead by now!
PEPIN: But, mother...
BERENGARIA: I was just beginning to feel my life ebb away when you two come in and ruin everything.
FROBISHER: But surely you can't want to die?
BERENGARIA: I am the wife of a dead god. I have no purpose any longer. I am an anachronism.
(A touch kindlier:)
Pepin, you are a god. However spineless you were as a mortal, you should know better now.

PEPIN: No, mother. I abdicated. Frobisher here is god.
BERENGARIA: Impossible! He's not even in the family!
PEPIN: I'm now the high priest.
BERENGARIA: Fallen gods don't get to be their successors' high priests! Like me, Pepin, you have no function now. The rituals say we should be dead.
PEPIN: Mother, Frobisher believes that the rituals are wrong. He believes that we can think for ourselves, make our own choices, and find happiness!
BERENGARIA: Well, big talking bird. Is that what you think?
FROBISHER: *(awkwardly)* Well, it did seem like a good idea...
BERENGARIA: The rituals by which we run our lives are sacrosanct. They are the only things which give our existence any meaning.
FROBISHER: But they don't make any sense.
BERENGARIA: Of course they don't make any sense. Otherwise they wouldn't have to be rituals - we'd be doing them without a second thought. But they bring a continuity, a certain security. You, Pepin, as high priest. Do you intend to betray your bird god here?
PEPIN: Of course not. He's my friend.
BERENGARIA: But the high priest always betrays his god. That's what he's for. It's tradition, don't you see? When you don't, everyone will get confused.
FROBISHER: But when they see that treachery and murder aren't the way it has to be, that you can make your own decisions...
BERENGARIA: Then what? You do my people no favours by giving them free will, bird god. The king will still be king, the slave will still be slave. At least they knew that before. And they knew that persecutor or persecuted, their time would come, and each of them, like me, will one day die a heretic's death in a dungeon somewhere. All of us, we're all executed eventually. How long have you been a god? How long has it taken you to wreck our society?
FROBISHER: Well. I started this afternoon, actually.
BERENGARIA: I don't want you to save me, bird god. I want to die, as I should have done. If you touch my wounds again, can you take away my life as freely as you saved it?
FROBISHER: I don't think so. I'm sorry.
BERENGARIA: Then what is your divinity worth? Leave us. I would be alone with my son one last time.

Scene 42: INT.
The vaults. Echo.

BOY/SCRIBE: You say I have been constructed?
DOCTOR: Yes.
BOY/SCRIBE: As a killing machine?
DOCTOR: Killing. Torturing. Inflicting pain.
BOY/SCRIBE: Do you think I would be good at it, Doctor?
DOCTOR: I imagine you would.
BOY/SCRIBE: Then you should be very frightened of me.
DOCTOR: *(sincerely)* Oh. I am. I am.
BOY: *(back to the child voice)* Do you think I'd be the bestest torturer in the world? Do you think my father would be proud of me? *(Short pause)*
Well? Would my daddy be proud? Would he bounce me

on his knee and chuck me under the chin, would he give me a kiss and put me to bed and read me a little story before I fall asleep? Do you think he would? ...Who is my father?
DOCTOR: I cannot tell you.
BOY: Why not?
DOCTOR: Because he is the man you have been constructed to kill.
BOY: You are wrong, Doctor. I do not want to kill my father.
DOCTOR: You don't?
BOY: No. I want to beg his forgiveness.
DOCTOR: Forgiveness for what?
BOY: ...I don't know. There must have been a good reason he killed me. ...Tell me who my father is, Doctor.
DOCTOR: I won't.
(And there is a sudden gust of wind. The DOCTOR winces in pain at the suddenness of it. The wind continues under the scene:)
BOY: You know I can invade your mind. You know I can extract the information. You know I can tear you apart to find it.
DOCTOR: Yes.
BOY: You know that I am your god. And I move in very mysterious ways.
DOCTOR: I know that here you're all-powerful. But you are no god.
(The wind blows stronger. And then over it, the sound effect as earlier, as the BOY enters the DOCTOR's mind. The DOCTOR screams.)
BOY: You shall show me the truth. Does it hurt, Doctor? As I look through your memories?
DOCTOR: Yes!
BOY: Does it hurt a lot? Will daddy be proud?
(And the humming grows still more intense. The DOCTOR cries out.)
...What is this? What trick is this? All these places. You call them... seas. Oceans. Planets, stars... Galaxies! Am I god of all this? How can I be god of all this?
DOCTOR: *(with difficulty)* It's the universe...
BOY: No! This castle is the universe! There is no other! And I am god of it all!
DOCTOR: *(painfully)* Can you find your father? He's there somewhere...
BOY: The millions of people you have known! Millions upon millions upon millions! Are all these my subjects? Must I kill them all? No! It's a lie, a dirty lie, you're a dirty liar! The castle is the universe, and my father is the centre of it!
(The sound effect fades. Both the BOY and the DOCTOR are weak.)
I can't find my father, not amongst so many people. Tell me who he is!
DOCTOR: *(weakly)* You'll have to find him for yourself.
BOY: Then I will! Then I will!
DOCTOR: And how long will that take? You may be a god, but you're still just a little boy. With little legs. You've got maybe two miles of steps to climb, and I'm not going to carry you.
BOY: Don't laugh at me! I'll find him! I'll find him, and ask his forgiveness, and we'll rule forever! And then you'll be sorry!
(He vanishes.)
DOCTOR: ...He's gone... He's just gone... Of course, I'm a fool. He

must be able to move anywhere in the castle at will! With mental powers of that scale... well, a bit of instant teleportation isn't going to give him too many problems. This is his world... And within it, he can do just about anything he likes.
(Slow footsteps, as he drags himself across the floor.)
Two miles of steps. I must find Frobisher. I just hope there's time.

Scene 43: INT.
The dungeon. As before.

(PEPIN gives a grunt, and the chains fall loose.)
PEPIN: There, mother. You're freed from your chains.
BERENGARIA: I didn't ask for that.
PEPIN: *(gently)* I took the skin off my hands doing it. A thank you would have been nice, you know...
BERENGARIA: I don't understand it, Pepin. You always seem to expect some affection from me.
PEPIN: Well, after all these years, I think 'expect' is a little strong...
BERENGARIA: Quite why you feel that my being your mother should earn you a place in my heart is beyond me. You made my belly swell up for nine long months and you ruined my figure forever. At best, I should find the inconvenience of your birth rather irritating.
PEPIN: I'm sorry...
BERENGARIA: At worst, your constant apologising aggravates my gout. Did you really hope I'd be happy to be alive, if it meant I had to see you again?
PEPIN: I only wanted some attention from you and father. It didn't have to be good attention. But even when you both hit me, you were looking the other way...
BERENGARIA: You're not the only one who couldn't get attention from your father. Though I must admit, as the years went by, I began to see the advantage in it. Your father and I despised you, Pepin.
PEPIN: Yes. I know.
BERENGARIA: It was nothing personal. The imperial family always despises its offspring. It's tradition. When you have children, you'll see. You won't be able to stand them any more than we could stand you. It will make you a man.
PEPIN: I'd hoped you'd be pleased we had saved your life...
BERENGARIA: It isn't ever talked about, but at your age your father was as pathetic as you.
PEPIN: But he was such a monster...
BERENGARIA: He was a stammering fool, a congenital idiot who couldn't string two words together without dribbling. His father made him that. And you, the moronic son he hated, made him what he became, every inch the tyrant god. You see, I know. As empress, I know what this society is - and it's obsessed with fathers hating sons following fathers hating sons, it's all that it cares about.
PEPIN: What are you saying?
BERENGARIA: If you were still emperor, Pepin, you would have become like your father. Your son would have turned you into a god. It's what fathers and sons have done to each other, ritually, over the centuries. It's tradition.

PEPIN: It's too late for that now, mother.
BERENGARIA: And tradition has been broken. From what you've told me, as soon as that blue temple appeared in the throne room it destroyed all that we hold dear.
(We hear the rattle of chains gently as she picks them up.)
I'd have preferred to have stayed in these chains. But they're broken now.
(And she drops them with a clatter on to the ground.)

Scene 44: INT.
A tunnel off the vaults.

(Running footsteps, tired but determined.)
DOCTOR: *(panting)* These tunnels all look the same... Well, they always do, don't they? So long as I keep going up... I just hope I'm not too late...
(And then, overlapping those footsteps, we hear some others from the other direction.)
CLOVIS: Doctor!
(The DOCTOR stops dead.)
DOCTOR: Who is that? ...Oh. Clovis. It's you.
CLOVIS: Doctor! I need your help!
DOCTOR: No time for that. You're just getting in my way.
CLOVIS: I've been hiding in these tunnels for my very life. We have to destroy that creature down there, but we'll stand no chance alone. Together we may yet be able to defeat it!
(Purposeful footsteps.)
DOCTOR: Clovis, at the first opportunity you'd sell me out. In fact, that's already your plan, isn't it? You want to offer me to the child in exchange for your life.
(The footsteps stop. Then they slowly walk back the way they came. Short pause)
CLOVIS: How did you know?
DOCTOR: It's what you do. You were created by a man with a limited imagination and a taste for the melodramatic. I'm sorry, Clovis. I can't trust you. I won't take you with me.
CLOVIS: *(musing)* I don't want to betray anybody. I don't think my father or my grandfather did either. It just feels like something I have to do, I can't help myself. I'd really much rather be a good man. But I'm not, am I, Doctor?
DOCTOR: I'm afraid not.
CLOVIS: What's the matter with me?
DOCTOR: I really don't think you'd understand.
CLOVIS: Please try.
DOCTOR: There's really very little time for this...
CLOVIS: I don't want to be this way! I've been trying to puzzle it out for years. Please.
DOCTOR: ...You're a stereotype.
CLOVIS: A stereotype?
DOCTOR: I'm afraid the man who created you had very little interest in giving you any real depth or personality. You behave in a series of predictable responses to the events around you.
CLOVIS: The man? Our creator?
DOCTOR: Your creator, Clovis. And the creator of your world. This

place, and all that is within it, is a fiction. You are a fiction. Nothing you say or do counts for anything, because it's already been predetermined.
CLOVIS: But that's what our religion has always taught us, Doctor. That we have no free will.
DOCTOR: I can't take you with me, Clovis. I cannot trust you. It's not your fault, I feel sorry for you. You're not even the lead villain, just a sort of sidekick henchman.
CLOVIS: Goodbye, Doctor. And good luck. When the creature kills me I shall try to die nobly, against my nature.
DOCTOR: I'm sorry. Good luck.
(Footsteps running off. We hear the nervous breathing of CLOVIS.)
CLOVIS: Right. Right. Think noble. Think noble.
(And the same sound effect used when the BOY vanished.)
Oh God. You've found me. It's too early, I haven't found a way to be noble yet...!
BOY: Are you my father?
CLOVIS: Be brave. Think noble. Try and act against my nature...
BOY: I said, are you my father?
CLOVIS: Keep away from me! Don't hurt me!
BOY: Father? Is that you?
CLOVIS: Don't kill me! I'll tell you anything you want! The Doctor, are you looking for the Doctor? He's just run that way! You can still catch him!...
(And the merging sound effect. CLOVIS screams with pain.)
BOY: Hush, little man. You don't need to tell me anything. I can take what you know for myself.
(And the scream freezes.)
...Ah, this is better. A much easier mind to digest.

Scene 45: INT.
The throne room.

FROBISHER: I need to think about all this... I can do it better from the comfort of my own throne. If you've got to think, might as well do it in the most comfortable chair in the castle...
(And a heavy door opens, and closes. As it does so, we hear a frightened shriek, and someone scurrying away.)
Hey, you! Yes, you! What are you doing in my throne room? No-one is allowed in here without my permission!
SCRIBE: Keep away from me...
FROBISHER: Do you know who I am? I'm God, that's who! And there's no use hiding under the throne either. Oy! I can still see you!
SCRIBE: It's coming to find me, don't let it find me...
FROBISHER: Wait a moment. You're the scribe. The one who was with the Doctor!
SCRIBE: I'm Eugene Tacitus. Only Eugene Tacitus...
FROBISHER: Where is the Doctor?
SCRIBE: The Doctor's dead.
FROBISHER: What?
SCRIBE: He must be, he went back there, he'll never have survived. But it doesn't matter, you see, it doesn't matter...
FROBISHER: What are you talking about?
SCRIBE: Leave me alone...

FROBISHER: Come out from under there! I'll pull you out if I have to. Right...
(And we hear him pull the SCRIBE with a grunt. He slides across the floor. The throne topples over.)
SCRIBE: No. please...! Leave me somewhere to hide!
FROBISHER: What do you mean, the Doctor's dead? Tell me!
SCRIBE: He would have died anyway. You are all going to die anyway. It's coming for me now, and it'll kill everything in its path.
FROBISHER: What is it? What's wanting to kill you?
SCRIBE: Oh, it won't kill me. That's not the way it works. I'll kill it. I always kill it. over and over again. I'm so sick of it...
(Screams outside.)
FROBISHER: What's that?
SCRIBE: You're all going to die for my sins. I'm only Eugene Tacitus. I'm nothing. Who would have thought I was worth such carnage?

Scene 46: INT.
Elsewhere in the castle. A background of screams, of fear and pain.

BOY: Where is my father? Are you my father? No, then die! *(He laughs.)* I like the smell of death, I like the sound it makes. My daddy would be proud if he could see me. I'm a murderer now, just like him. If my daddy were here, we would make the people die together! I want my father!

Scene 47: INT.
The throne room.

(Continuous to the above scene, the screaming becomes an undercurrent. The SCRIBE appears to be narrating over it.)
SCRIBE: He will appear out of thin air and kill at random. The blood flows down the castle walls, the very air is dark with death - oh my god, so much death, so much... Who would have thought I was worth it? Who would have thought an old man had so much blood in him?
FROBISHER: What can we do to stop it? ...Look at me!!
SCRIBE: Nothing. He has come for me, as he always does, as he always will. And before he finds me, he likes to destroy my little world.
(The throne room doors burst open.)
SEJANUS: Your majesty!
FROBISHER: What is it, Sejanus?
SEJANUS: Your people are being slaughtered! What are your orders?
FROBISHER: My orders?
SEJANUS: Save us, sire! Save your good and loyal subjects!
FROBISHER: I'm sorry. I don't know how!
SEJANUS: ...But you're our god. You're supposed to know. You're supposed to know everything.
SCRIBE: He isn't a god!
SEJANUS: What?
SCRIBE: That child out there, that is your only god. And his name is death. There is no hope, Sejanus! No hope at all!
(Heavy chainmail footsteps. A sword is drawn.)
SEJANUS: *(coldly)* We believed in you. We had faith in you.

FROBISHER: *(softly)* I'm sorry.
SEJANUS: The people are hugging on to your statues, hoping it might save their lives. But they're cut down all the same.
(Short pause. Then the sword is sheathed. And the footsteps walk away.)
FROBISHER: Where are you going?
SEJANUS: If I had the time I would chop off your feathered head and stick it on a spike. But I must try to save the people you betrayed.
SCRIBE: There is no hope. You will all die.
SEJANUS: I know. But I would sooner die defending their lives than his.
(The door slams shut.)
FROBISHER: We must help him!
SCRIBE: Barricade the door. You'll never see him again.
(A background clatter as FROBISHER drags furniture over to the door. Our point of view stays with the SCRIBE, who speaks softly, almost in sing-song:)
Why could I not love my child? My own child, I tried so hard, I really tried, but I couldn't, I failed, I couldn't. My own son, it's normal to love your son, it's natural. Why can't I be normal like that? *(And loud:)* I promise to love you, son! Whatever you want, I promise! So long as you stay away from me!

Scene 48: INT.
The dungeons.

BERENGARIA: Leave me now, Pepin. I would be on my own when I die.
PEPIN: But Frobisher healed you.
BERENGARIA: Yes, thanks to him it'll probably take weeks for me to starve to death. But I'll starve eventually.
PEPIN: Come with me, mother. You're free. There's nothing to stop you.
(A rattle of chains.)
BERENGARIA: I shall wrap these around me. And pretend I'm still manacled to the wall.
PEPIN: Come with me. back to the court. Live, and break tradition.
(Short pause)
Goodbye, mother.
(And we hear his footsteps. And then, over them, a faint echo of the SCRIBE's voice.)
SCRIBE: Why could I not love my child? My own child, I tried so hard...
BERENGARIA: *(almost dreamlike, picking up on it straight after it has faded)* Why could I not love my child? My own son, it's normal to love your son. It is normal, it is what should be. Why can't I be normal like that?
(The footsteps stop during the above.)
PEPIN: *(uncertainly)* Mother? What are you saying?
BERENGARIA: I don't know... I don't know where that came from... Have I been wrong all these years?
PEPIN: Mother. I don't want you to die.
(And now the echo of the SCRIBE's desperate scream.)
SCRIBE: I promise to love you, son! Whatever you want, I

promise!
BERENGARIA: *(carefully)* Pepin. My own child. I understand what you want from me. I understand it now. But I'm not sure I can give it. That's all. I'm not sure I know how to love.
PEPIN: *(firmly)* I won't leave you, mother. You can starve here if you must. But I won't leave your side.
BERENGARIA: And what about your god? Don't you love him?
PEPIN: I love you.
(Short pause)
BERENGARIA: Then stay. And who knows, perhaps you'll do the impossible. And teach me after all.
(And we hear the BOY appear. And the buzz of an intense light.)
It's so bright! I can't see...
PEPIN: What is it, mother? Covered in so much blood...
BERENGARIA: I don't know. But I imagine it's come here to kill us.
BOY: *(innocently)* Are you my father?
PEPIN: *(bravely)* Keep back! This is my mother, and I shall protect her!
BERENGARIA: Pepin!
PEPIN: Stop! I tell you to stop!
BOY: I'm looking for my father. Do you know where he might be?
PEPIN: I shan't let you hurt her.
BOY: I shall find out if you are my father. And if you are not, you shall die.
PEPIN: *(laughing)* I don't care! Do what you want! Don't you understand? I'm not frightened of anything any more!
(Their bodies merge, but PEPIN doesn't scream. The sound effect fades, and the body hits the floor.)
BOY: He didn't scream. I like it when they scream.
BERENGARIA: *(flatly)* You killed my son just as I was getting to know him.
BOY: You can't be my father.
BERENGARIA: Hardly.
BOY: I thought you weren't. I'm looking for my father. Tell me where he is and I will let you live.
BERENGARIA: Will you?
BOY: *(thoughtfully)* No. But tell me anyway. And when I find him I shall be god and rule forever.
BERENGARIA: You're no god of mine.
BOY: *(petulantly)* I certainly am your god! There's no-one half as godly as me! Get down on your knees and worship me!
BERENGARIA: And I shan't worship you.
BOY: Why not?
BERENGARIA: Free will. I choose not to.
BOY: You choose?
BERENGARIA: I choose. Maybe the bird was right after all.
BOY: If you don't worship me, I shall kill you! I've killed lots and lots of people!
BERENGARIA: I believe you. But I choose not to live in a world where you are the master.
BOY: Then die!
(And the merging sound effect again. Over it, with relief:)
BERENGARIA: At last. I've been waiting so long.

Scene 49: INT.
The throne room.

SCRIBE: *(softly)* They'll all be dead now, Frobisher. That's always the way it happens. And it'll come for you soon enough...
FROBISHER: You know, you're really not helping...!
SCRIBE: *(ignoring him)* And then it'll just be me. And I'll have to kill it. And go through it all over again, always, all over again...
(Underneath this, there is a banging at the door.)
FROBISHER: There's someone out there!
SCRIBE: *(stubbornly)* Not possible. All dead. Everyone.
(FROBISHER runs to the door.)
SCRIBE: No! You mustn't open it!
(A clatter as FROBISHER destroys the barricade.)
FROBISHER: If there's a chance anyone's still alive... Can you hear me out there?
SCRIBE: I won't let you open it! No!
FROBISHER: Get off me!
SCRIBE: I'm not ready to kill again!
FROBISHER: Get off! I don't want to hurt you, but I'm a private eye, and I can protect myself!
(And a crash as the SCRIBE is thrown, presumably into the furniture.)
Sorry, but I did warn you.
(And the door swings open.)
SCRIBE: No! Don't let it in!
DOCTOR: Well, you took your time.
FROBISHER: Doctor! I thought you were dead!
DOCTOR: Don't bother closing the doors, Frobisher.
FROBISHER: But we had barricaded ourselves in...
DOCTOR: There's no point. What we're up against can bypass doors or walls at will.
FROBISHER: What are we up against?
SCRIBE: It can't be! You should be dead! It always kills everyone before it comes for me!
DOCTOR: Ah, Eugene. I wondered where I would find you.
SCRIBE: Keep away from me!
(And he runs and hides himself amongst the furniture. We hear the clatter.)
FROBISHER: He's scared out of his wits, Doc. And frankly, underneath my cool penguin exterior, I'm getting a little rattled myself. Am I pleased to see you!
DOCTOR: What happened to your beak? It looks blunter somehow...
FROBISHER: Oh, that's not the half of it. Some homicidal child is out there killing my subjects, and I seem to have become immortal.
DOCTOR: Come now, Frobisher. Things may be pretty grim, but you're not a god. The universe can take some comfort from that.
FROBISHER: The bullets passed right through me, Doc! I was shot at point blank range and I wasn't even scratched!
DOCTOR: This place is a fiction, Frobisher. A very elaborate fiction, I grant you, but no more substantial. And it is populated by fictitious people. They can't hurt us.
FROBISHER: What? This is all make-believe? But it seems so real...
DOCTOR: That's the idea.

FROBISHER: Well, if they can't hurt us, then we're okay, aren't we? Everything's all right.
DOCTOR: Everything is very far from being all right. We're not the only two real people here. There's still the author of this fantasy. And the killer out there trying to find him.
FROBISHER: What author?
DOCTOR: Who do you think? Who's been writing it all along?
FROBISHER: You mean that little man is responsible for all this?
DOCTOR: In a way, yes. He created all the people here, and the pointless rituals by which they ran their lives.
FROBISHER: Right. Come out from that pile of furniture. I've got a few bones to pick with you...!
(And we hear the clatter as he pulls out the SCRIBE.)
SCRIBE: No! Please don't hurt me...
DOCTOR: Take it easy, Frobisher. I think if he ever knew he was the author, he's long since forgotten. Look at him!
SCRIBE: Please don't let it find me... I can't go through it all again!
DOCTOR: I'm sure that's part of the punishment. To create a world for yourself, and only be a servant in it. To be a god, but never know it.
FROBISHER: The punishment?
DOCTOR: He didn't create the world out of choice, Frobisher. This is a prison. There's no escape from it.
FROBISHER: A prison? What, all of this castle's a prison?
SCRIBE: That's right.
FROBISHER: Just for one prisoner? Just for you? It's a bit big, isn't it?
DOCTOR: Oh, I don't think so. I imagine, from the outside, it looks no bigger than a blue police box.

Scene 50: INT.
Elsewhere in the castle. The sound of destruction in the background.

BOY: *(exultant)* Father! Father, can you see me? I have destroyed all the people you made. Aren't you proud? And now I shall destroy your world.
(And we hear the sound of walls tumbling, rocks falling. And replaced by a peculiar static buzz - the same sound heard on the TARDIS scanner in part one.)

Scene 51: INT.
The throne room.

(A heavy throne is righted by the SCRIBE, babbling.)
SCRIBE: Must set my throne straight. It's my throne, and I must sit on it.
DOCTOR: Eugene...
SCRIBE: No, Doctor! I'm the god now. I'm the one responsible for all this!
FROBISHER: His mind's completely gone.
DOCTOR: It's hardly surprising. He's probably been trapped here for hundreds of years.
FROBISHER: It's not possible...

DOCTOR: Just think about it. A prison cell bigger on the inside than it is on the outside. Where time and space have no meaning, where you can build an entire world with centuries of history. And live through all those centuries, until you forget you're not part of the illusion.
FROBISHER: That's obscene?
DOCTOR: And every once in a while something is sent in. To destroy the world completely. And make him relive his crime in every horrific detail.
FROBISHER: The little boy he's been talking about?
DOCTOR: This time, yes. This time it took the shape of a five year old boy used in a cruel religious experiment. Next time it could be the high priest, or the queen consort. Or any character within this fiction of his.
SCRIBE: And always with that face! Always with the same face!
FROBISHER: How long have you known?
DOCTOR: Not long. But I've always had my suspicions about this place. I knew there must be some reason the TARDIS brought us here after you interfered with the dimensional controls. She was drawn to something which had similar properties. An artificial environment in which she could recuperate.
FROBISHER: I thought it had brought us here because it quite fancied being a temple.
DOCTOR: I'll have you know, Frobisher, that like her owner, the TARDIS has her ego fully under control.
(Underneath the last few lines the sound of the static has been introduced gradually. It's now much more noticeable.)
FROBISHER: Doctor, look! Outside the door - there's nothing there! Just... static...
DOCTOR: It's what the TARDIS saw when we first landed. The child must have almost finished its work, and destroyed the prisoner's creation.
FROBISHER: Which means it's nearly ready for us?
DOCTOR: I'm afraid so.
(A clatter as the SCRIBE rises.)
SCRIBE: My world! What's happened to my world?
DOCTOR: Eugene. Eugene, listen to me. The child is coming. Your son will soon be here. You've seen this before, what happens next?
SCRIBE: There's nothing left out there! What good will my histories be now?
FROBISHER: None of it's real. None of it was ever real!
DOCTOR: Except for the child. The child who comes back to haunt you.
SCRIBE: Yes, that's right... Always the same face... I kill it, but it keeps coming back! What does it mean?
DOCTOR: That's the punishment, don't you see? You create a world. The child destroys it. Then you destroy the child. Then you create the world. Over and over again. Don't you see, Eugene?
SCRIBE: I'm beginning... to remember...
FROBISHER: What's happening?
DOCTOR: Now that the fantasy's broken down, there's nothing left to distract him...
SCRIBE: I remember who I am! I remember! Oh my god...
DOCTOR: What happens next, Eugene?

SCRIBE: Is that who I am? Oh my god...
(The BOY appears.)
FROBISHER: Doctor...!
DOCTOR: Not now, Frobisher!
FROBISHER: The child is here! It's covered in blood...
DOCTOR: I said, not now! Tell us, Eugene!
BOY: Are you my father?
DOCTOR: Keep back, Frobisher! Look at the boy, Eugene!
BOY: Father?
SCRIBE: No...
DOCTOR: What did you do to this child?
SCRIBE: I murdered him. I murdered my son.
FROBISHER: Oh no...
SCRIBE: I created this world, a perfect place to live, everything ordered, everything ritualised. And for a while I can forget what I did. I can live in peace, without the guilt. And then the history stops making sense, and the face comes back, the same face comes back to remind me!
BOY: Father! Tell me! Are you my father?
SCRIBE: But don't worry. I have a knife. I'll kill it again! I'll save you both!
DOCTOR: No, Eugene...
SCRIBE: I'm the only one who can stop it!
DOCTOR: But that's what you always do, Eugene, isn't it? The child wants you to kill it. It's trying to make you act out your crime again!
BOY: Are you my father? Are you my murderer?
DOCTOR: Kill him and you'll be killing him again and again forever. Break the ritual!
SCRIBE: I can't...
DOCTOR: Set yourself free!
SCRIBE: I'm frightened.
DOCTOR: Look around! There's nothing left! Even the throne room has disappeared! There's nothing left of your fantasy except your dead son. Speak to him. You have no choice.
(Indeed, underneath the last few lines, the static has been getting louder. Short pause)
BOY: Are you my father?
SCRIBE: Yes.
BOY: Really and truly?
SCRIBE: Yes. ...What are you doing? Why are you on your knees?
BOY: To ask you forgiveness.
SCRIBE: My forgiveness? No, please, don't say that...!
BOY: I must have done something very wrong, daddy, for you to have killed me like that. What did I do?
SCRIBE: Oh, my poor boy... I don't remember...
BOY: You do, daddy. You remember everything now. Why did you do it?
SCRIBE: I remember you were sleeping. Still on your bed, peaceful. And I took the knife. And I held it over you for a while, trying to work out if I could go through with it... to work out if I could stop myself...
BOY: *(crying)* Why did you kill me?

SCRIBE: *(brokenly)* Because I'm insane. My poor boy. Because I'm quite, quite mad. My poor beautiful son. How could I ever think of harming you?
BOY: You're holding a knife. Are you going to kill me again?
DOCTOR: Don't do it, Eugene! You've got to break this cycle!
SCRIBE: No, I can't...
DOCTOR: Throw away the knife! Just throw it away!
FROBISHER: Eugene! No, don't give it to the child...!
SCRIBE: Not this time. You're going to have to be very brave...
FROBISHER: No! What are you doing?
DOCTOR: Eugene, stop this!
SCRIBE: Take the hilt, like that...
BOY: I take the hilt...
SCRIBE: And hold the blade against my chest...
FROBISHER: You've got to stop this! Doctor, do something!
DOCTOR: I'm trying! I can't touch them! I can't pull the knife away! My fingers are going straight through...!
SCRIBE: This is my world, Doctor. This is my fiction. And I choose not to make you part of it.
DOCTOR: Eugene! Don't do this! There has got to be a better way!
BOY: Shall I push the knife into your chest, father?
DOCTOR: Don't let this happen! I can take you away from here! I can set you free!
SCRIBE: But I remember it all, Doctor! Who I am, and what I have done. Please, I can't go through it all again...
FROBISHER: Eugene, stop!
SCRIBE: Only I can set myself free.
BOY: I am ready, father.
SCRIBE: And push the knife in. ...That's it.
BOY: I love you, daddy.
SCRIBE: I love you too, son. And I'm so sorry.
DOCTOR: *(weakly)* No...
FROBISHER: Look at the boy, Doctor! He's ageing!
BOY: *(his voice matures into that of the SCRIBE)* I love you, daddy. But it's all over now. It's all over now. It's all over.
DOCTOR: His mirror image. He's killing himself.
BOY/SCRIBE: Daddy? You were a god to me. And I thought we would rule forever.
(Silence, except for the static of the void.)
DOCTOR: *(quietly)* He didn't have to do that. He didn't have to do that.
FROBISHER: They've gone. They've both gone.
DOCTOR: The child's purpose was over.
FROBISHER: And there's nothing but the void.
DOCTOR: The void and the TARDIS. Come on.

Scene 52: INT.
The TARDIS console room. We hear the familiar sound of the doors opening, then closing. The usual blips and bleeps from the console as the Doctor pushes buttons.

DOCTOR: *(quietly)* Everything should be back to normal. The TARDIS should be fully recovered.
FROBISHER: All the fruit and flowers on the console. They've gone.

DOCTOR: Everything's gone. Gone forever.
FROBISHER: And all those people? They were killed, just to punish Eugene? ...That's terrible.
DOCTOR: If it's any consolation, they were never actually real in the first place.
FROBISHER: No, Doc. That's no consolation. They thought they were real, didn't they?
DOCTOR: *(sighing)* Just like the fish in the swimming pool. They felt pain, they felt fear. And more than that, they had hopes and dreams and families. ...Yes, it is terrible. But that's what comes of travelling in the TARDIS. All the people you meet, all the planets you see... you know they won't last forever, and our next journey could be to a time when they'll have been long forgotten. Such little lives. And we can feel like gods, set apart from them all.
FROBISHER: And that's supposed to make me feel better, is it?
DOCTOR: No. Not at all.
FROBISHER: For a while back there, Doc, I actually felt I could do some good. I actually felt I could save them all.
DOCTOR: *(heavily)* I know, Frobisher. Believe me. I know. ...Come on. Let's get away from here.

Scene 53: The void.
(The TARDIS dematerialises. And all that is left is the static.)

End of Part Four